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TRAGIC AMBIGUITY

Anthropology, Philosophy and Sophocles' Antigone

BY

Th. C. W. OUDEMANS AND A. P. M. H. LARDINOIS



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Th. C. W. OUDEMANS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Intercultural comparisons

Anyone turning his attention to Sophocles' *Antigone*—part of Europe's cultural heritage as well as a trace of a long vanished culture—will soon realize that he is on slippery ground. On the one hand the text is so familiar that his interpretation is in danger of merely reflecting his own preconceived notions. On the other hand, all attempts at translation and interpretation seem to founder on the rock of unfamiliarity which the tragedy represents. The text oscillates between the familiar and the alien because the *Antigone* is part of a cosmology (the cluster of preconceptions that a culture possesses regarding man's position between nature and the religious sphere, in various social connections, between birth and death, and in the order of being in general) which differs radically from our own. This cosmology is characterized by a logic of ambiguity, of contagious pollution, of insoluble paradox, in a universe governed by maleficent gods, in which human transgressions may cause upheavals of the entire cosmic order.

At the same time the cosmology of the *Antigone* is familiar to us, not merely because this tragedy touches emotional chords in the modern European mind, but primarily because it tries to cope with cosmological problems with which we are confronted as well, although its solutions and ours are mutually exclusive. In this sense, the *Antigone* is a thorn in the flesh of modern European cosmology; small wonder that a range of interpretative efforts have been made either to remove the thorn or to turn it into something beneficial.

First, there are the painstaking reconstructions of text and meaning which try to go upstream to the source, efforts by scholars freeing themselves from as many contemporary prejudices as possible in order to distinguish the original tragedy and separate it from the layers of interpretative history. There is no reason to raise a contemptuous eyebrow at separative philology and history, as has become fashionable: without continuing separative effort there is no remedy against assimilation of the text to the interpreter's prejudices nor hope of clarification of obscure passages. Nevertheless, it is an illusion to believe that interpretative separations will be able to erase every contemporary bias. The interpreter's cosmological preconceptions will inevitably determine his con-

ception not only of the meaning of the text, but even of what makes up that text itself. This is illustrated by one of the most hotly debated cruxes in the *Antigone*: the verses 904-20. Although they belong to the best attested lines of the play (we even have Aristotle's authority for them), the discussion whether the lines should be rejected or not will go on forever because it is the interpreter's conception of the *Antigone* as a whole that determines their incorporation or elision. The arguments that philologists employ with regard to such textual questions are surprising. Jebb for example rejects lines 904-20 stating reasons such as that the composition is unworthy of Sophocles and that the lines embody a morally unacceptable limitation of Antigone's divine law (A 164). This may be an extreme example, but the play abounds with textual questions the answers to which depend on the interpreter's conception of the *Antigone* as a whole.

Reading through the glasses of our time and cosmology, our interpretations inevitably employ our European logical schemes and tools: we use the criteria of clearness and distinctness and the logical principles of identity and non-contradiction. With such implements we approach a cosmology not based on these principles and permeated with the ambiguity and contradictions we have to reject (cf. Vernant MSG 250). This fundamental inconsistency makes it extremely difficult for the modern interpreter to appreciate oxymora such as Antigone's self-description as *ἁγία πανουργήσας* ('having committed a holy crime' - 74). We find it hard, if not impossible, to combine crime with holiness. Therefore many interpreters separate the crime from the holiness or believe that the expression is sarcastic. This example shows that we do not only remain immersed in our own preconceptions, but that our understanding will also inevitably remain at a distance from the *Antigone*: we can point out genuine contradictions, but we cannot share in a culture which has them at its roots.

In his hermeneutic theory Gadamer has tried to counterbalance the impossibility of approaching the original with an unprejudiced mind. He maintains that interpretation should not primarily consist in divesting oneself of one's prejudices in order to confront the purity of an original, but should be the actual application of one's partly unconscious prejudices to texts which are not pure sources, but rather diamonds which are never definitely cut, and which, through the ever renewed questions they are asked, reveal ever new facets, reflected in ever new aspects of the interpreter himself. Gadamer argues that the interpreter should not leave his 'horizon' of questions and preconceptions behind, but confront his own ideas with the horizon of the text, for example the question of whether an individual can rely on a form of justice which is opposed to

the interests of the state, or whether the government should be in control of the burial of corpses. What Gadamer aims at is not a return to the pure source, but a fusion of the horizons of the text and of the interpreter in a higher unity which comprises both (Gadamer WM 360, 364).

The problems with this approach are twofold. First, it should be emphasized that updatings of texts soon become irritatingly strident when they let their perception of the modern age and its discontents prevail over the meaning of the text. The line between revealing hidden depths and *Hineininterpretieren* is hard to draw. It is dangerous to ask contemporary questions of the *Antigone*, because such questions might obscure the issues relevant to ancient Greek cosmology. For example, it is doubtful whether the Greeks would have recognized the essentially romantic problem of the individual in revolt against the state.

A second problem is that it is doubtful whether a fusion of horizons in a higher unity is not bought at a price—the price of the suppression of those aspects of the text which cannot be incorporated into the new unity. The temptation to assimilate the text to one's contemporary prejudices is almost irresistible in the light of the human need to be at home with oneself, and therefore to digest and appropriate all strangeness which texts may offer. Applicative transformations of a text may throw light on aspects of meaning which remain hidden to separative reconstructions, but in order to reach the new harmony they have to be separative in another way: they separate by assimilation. This assimilation may turn out to be a silent expropriation, however. When Jebb compares *Antigone* to a Christian martyr, for example, or when Böll compares her to Ulrike Meinhof, the danger arises that she loses her tragic character. We shall argue that the differences between ancient Greek cosmology and our own are too great for a fusion of horizons ever to succeed. The recalcitrance of the *Antigone* defies any attempt at harmony.

A third interpretative trend, Derrida's anti-separative and anti-appropriative grammatology, has taught us that it is illusory to believe that there are pure, uncontaminated sources to be found by spirits who have freed themselves from the burden of European cosmology. And Derrida has rightly emphasized that every interpretation is a *greffe*—both an incision and a graft causing unpredictable changes in the meaning of the text, which implies that an appropriative harmony between text and interpreter is precluded *a priori*.

Derrida highlights the insurmountable difficulties in interpreting and translating Greek sources by discussing the various meanings of *pharmakon* in Plato's philosophy. Our mode of thinking has not only been determined by Plato's metaphysics but by the principles of identity and non-contradiction in general, culminating in the philosophy of

Descartes. This makes it almost impossible to retain the variable and internally conflicting range of meanings of the word *pharmakon*, a word referring simultaneously to substances which we distinguish clearly as each other's opposites, such as poisons, drugs, medicines, and even tragedy (Derrida Diss 112). Words like *pharmakon* point to a cosmology of ambiguity which lies at the root of cosmological order, but which at the same time threatens its purity. We believe that this is the fundamental issue of the *Antigone*: the duplicity of human and divine order and the power which both underlies and undermines this order. The problems of interpreting the text of Sophocles are even more onerous than those which emerge in understanding Plato's metaphysics. Whereas Plato tries to use philosophy as a medicine of purity against the powers which threaten to undermine it, Sophocles' tragedies increase the conflicts between order and ambiguity in unpredictable directions. The key word in our interpretation will be the word *deinon*, which does not only indicate a divided unity of what is terrible and what is wonderful, but also the awesome power which permeates the cosmological order.

We agree with Derrida that we are bound hand and foot to separative European cosmology, but not with his conviction that by an insinuating and parasitic mode of interpretation the idea of *episteme*, of knowledge based on identity and non-contradiction (Gr 68, P 49), can be undermined. He tries to employ subversive power to unsettle separative order (ED 46-47), in a transformation of Nietzsche's commitment to Dionysian force. We are convinced that no interpretation trying to account for the conflict between power and order will be able to undermine modern European cosmology. This cosmology's grip is too strong for such an endeavour to have any chance of success. We shall employ the intellectual tools of separative cosmology, not in order to undermine it, but to point out those aspects of the *Antigone* which cannot be incorporated into our own cosmology. Those aspects apparently do not correspond with anything in our cosmology: we find blanks here. These blanks can be understood, but only in a distant way. We are unable to get really in touch with them because they are excluded from our separative cosmology. That we are trying to point out blanks in our cosmology does not imply that we claim the ability to make up an account of profit and loss by comparing our cosmology and that of the *Antigone*. There is no supra-cultural point of view from which such a comparison can be made. Therefore it is impossible either to speak of progress in cosmologies or to mourn the loss of tragedy. We merely hope to be able to assess the radical otherness of the *Antigone*, in offering resistance to some major interpretative trends in philology and philosophy, which time and again tend to exorcize the radical otherness of this tragedy through their separative and assimilative devices.

The awareness of these interpretative traps has not prevented us from trying—like modern Sisyphuses—to avoid the most obvious instances of deceptive familiarity and unnecessary obscurity by making a wide interpretative detour. We have tried to impose upon ourselves a temporary self-alienation, endeavouring to consider the *Antigone* as an expression of a foreign culture, in the hope of avoiding the danger of adjusting the tragic expressions of ancient Greek culture to our preconceptions moulded by Aristotle, Roman culture, Christianity, humanism and romanticism. In our search for the elusive source we have trodden again the path of Fustel de Coulanges:

In order to assess the truth about these ancient peoples, it is wise to study them without thinking of ourselves, as if they were totally foreign to us, with the same detachment and a spirit as free as if we were studying ancient India or Arabia.

Looked at in that way, Greece and Rome prove to possess an absolutely inimitable character. There is nothing resembling them in modern times. In the future nothing will be able to resemble them. (Fustel de Coulanges CA 2)

In order to effect a breach in the smooth continuity between our modern European culture and that of classical Greece we imposed upon ourselves the further self-alienation of studying relevant aspects of even remoter cultures than that of ancient Greece, in the hope of reaching the state of anthropological doubt described by Lévi-Strauss:

This “anthropological doubt” does not only consist of knowing that one knows nothing, but of resolutely exposing what one thought one knew—and one’s very ignorance—to buffeting and denials directed at one’s most cherished ideas and habits by other ideas and habits best able to rebut them. (Lévi-Strauss SA II 26) (Fr. AS II 37)

We realized from the outset that a random search for the original *Antigone* would be fruitless. At best, the restoration of the original would present us with a silent corpse. A contemporary guide-line structuring the interpretation and confronting us with hidden depths, both of the text and of our own prejudices, was indispensable. It is a fortunate fact that modern anthropology has more than alienating power: in recent years it has developed powerful schemes of intercultural comparison. We have attempted to apply to the *Antigone* some aspects of the structural method developed by Lévi-Strauss, especially in its modified form, as presented by authors like Douglas, Vernant, Vidal-Naquet, Girard, etc., which enabled us to account for the phenomenon of ambiguity.

The method of modified structuralism reveals the direction in which an interpretation should go to be on a par with the import of tragedy: it shows that structures and ambiguities are to be understood in the light

of human cosmology. That is the level on which the *Antigone* has to be approached. It is a document pertaining to the human condition, conceived as a web of cosmological relations (Segal TC 9). In the light of this approach Segal speaks of Sophocles' "philosophical anthropology" (TC vii). We are convinced that this anthropology can only be discovered in confrontation with our own anthropological preconceptions, which are of a cosmological nature. Prejudices of a cosmological nature constitute the conceptual framework of all scholarly effort, and do so tacitly in most cases. Today's most precise philological interpretations are only seemingly 'objective,' in the sense of being devoid of cosmological presuppositions. One example from a famous interpretative effort may suffice. In *The Presocratic Philosophers* Kirk and Raven discuss the meaning of *dike* and *adikia* in the philosophy of Anaximander and call the employment of this terminology with respect to nature an "anthropomorphic metaphor" (PP 119). In this apparently unprejudiced description a world of modern cosmological preconceptions lies concealed. Kirk and Raven presume that there is a distinction between a human sphere, to which a terminology of justice is proper, and a natural sphere, where this terminology is not properly applicable, and they suppose that the proper human meaning is transferred to nature, as a metaphor. This implies that their description is embedded in a tacit metaphysics, in which distinctions between the 'proper' and the 'metaphorical,' nature and the human sphere, human justice and the non-applicability of justice to nature, are presupposed.

By pointing out their specific modern signature philosophical anthropology can sometimes warn us if European metaphysical preconceptions are employed too easily, as in pointing out the possibility that a philosopher like Anaximander did not live in a cosmology based on such oppositions. Thus it may turn out that for Anaximander the application of *dike* to nature was not a metaphor, that to this philosopher nature was not a domain completely separated from the human sphere, and that, as a consequence, *dike* need not mean 'justice' in any contemporary sense. With respect to the *Antigone* too, some major interpretative trends are unconsciously based on European metaphysics and therefore yield only apparently correct interpretations of the tragedy.

From the foregoing, particularly our references to 'philosophical anthropology,' it may seem that we have committed the error of identifying ourselves with that modern scapegoat, the philosophy of man. In past decades this branch of philosophy has been attacked severely by outstanding philosophers. Foucault, for example, has described the discipline as chimerical, because the 'essence' of man is a mere humanistic phantom (MC 15), which cannot and need not be employed

in cultural anthropology (MC 390-91). But in discussing Lévi-Strauss' conception of the unity of mankind and opposing it to Wittgenstein's philosophy of family resemblances, we shall argue that philosophical anthropology is not committed to this essentialism. Lévi-Strauss aims at a reductive unity which, embodied in hidden eternal structures, underlies the variable surface of human cultural expressions. He speaks of a *marche régressive* which eliminates events and reflection in order to reach the finite repertoire of unconscious, unchangeable human possibilities (AS 30). It is true that Lévi-Strauss is not a reductionist in the sense that he tries to substitute simple structures for complex ones (PS 138, Marc-Lipiansky SLS 138), but he is a reductionist in the sense that he considers structures as varying combinations of pre-existing elements which are unalterable:

I am of the opinion[...]that—in their games, dreams or wild imaginings—human societies, like individuals, never create absolutely, but merely choose certain combinations from an ideal repertoire that it should be possible to define. (Lévi-Strauss TT 229) (Fr. TT 203)

In this respect Lévi-Strauss labours under the influence of essentialist metaphysics: the search for an identical hard core underneath the variable appearances. In other words, the Aristotelian scheme of *genus proximum* and *differentia specifica*. Such a reductive unity of the 'human mind' underneath the cultural variation (AS 28, 81) only exists in a highly formalized sense. To strip mankind of variability in order to preserve identical ground structures is futile, because the resulting identity is of too general a nature to provide us with substantial information. It is no accident that Lévi-Strauss confesses that anthropology is still hovering in the purgatory of social science, but that it will belong to natural science in the hour of the last judgment (AS II 29). His conception is that of a scientific metaphysics. This ideal has already proved vain when Lévi-Strauss himself admits that cultural comparisons are made in an irretrievably metaphoric mode, because they designate relations of which we only perceive in a confused way that they have something in common (CC 39). Intercultural comparison seems not to rest on an underlying unity of mankind (Marc-Lipiansky SLS 111-12).

Does this imply, as Foucault's criticism of 'mankind' as something ephemeral suggests, that it is impossible to speak of human nature, that there are only cultural variations, in short, that we have to be cultural relativists? There is one stubborn fact which makes this view untenable: that people from the most distant cultures, both in space and in time, show behaviour that is, up to a certain point, meaningful, and understandable as being human. This *aporia*, that there is no identical essence underlying mankind, but that people are nevertheless able to interpret

each other's behaviour as being meaningful, may be circumvented with the aid of Wittgenstein's anti-essentialist and anti-relativist philosophy. Wittgenstein realized that concepts, e.g. 'game,' 'proposition' and 'language' do not consist of underlying identities and superimposed variations, still less of atomized meanings. These concepts themselves are interconnected bundles of similarities and dissimilarities. They form metaphoric, broken wholes which cannot be further analyzed. Of pivotal importance in this respect is Wittgenstein's metaphoric terminology of kinship. A family is not a collection of individuals, yet is not connected by an underlying unity either. The whole interconnected network of analogies and variations is the divided unity of the family. Reduction to identity only leads to obliteration of the richness of the texture. The same is true of the employment of concepts:

We see that what we call "sentence" and "language" has not the formal unity that I imagined, but is the family of structures more or less related (*verwandt*) to one another (PU 108)

There is only kinship (*Verwandtschaft*) between the uses of a concept—direct and indirect relations of (dis)analogy (PU 65). It is interesting that whereas Wittgenstein compares language to kinship, Lévi-Strauss compares kinship to language (AS 69). The fundamental difference between them is that Lévi-Strauss searches for a common denominator, whereas Wittgenstein has left this paradigm of metaphysics behind.

We now give the notion of family resemblance one more twist by speaking of the family of man. In employing this phrase we want to dissociate ourselves from two obvious connotations: first, the humanistic aura which surrounds the family of man as a harmonious society of agreeing equals. For us, mankind is a normal family, which means that it is full of tension and struggle, mutual incomprehension, indifference, and sometimes hatred. Second, we do not agree with Wittgenstein's image of family resemblances as the fibres in a thread that need not run through its whole length, which implies that fibres a and b, and b and c may resemble each other, but that a and c may be incomparable. This may be true for conceptual resemblances, but not for the family of man. Here every member remains comparable to all other members.

Lévi-Strauss has shown that there is no short cut to the determination of human nature—all cultural variability has to be taken into account. Wittgenstein has shown that the detour must be even wider, and is in fact interminable. The relevant unity of mankind is not that of a reduction of variation, but consists of a picture of innumerable touches of (dis)similarities, of (dis)harmonies, which form the divided unity of a painting. What philosophical anthropology seeks is not a reduced unity,

but the interconnectedness which presents mankind as an ever variable, differentiated whole. It cannot be denied, for example, that in all human cosmologies certain fundamental boundaries recur, such as those between nature and culture, life and death, masculine and feminine. Confining ourselves to the last mentioned opposition, it is clear that a reduction of the distinction between male and female to a hard core (for instance, the biological difference) would imply an impoverishment of meaning which would make the distinction too formal to be informative. For example, masculine and feminine are terms which are not confined to men and women respectively: a man may be effeminate, a woman may have masculine tendencies. Moreover, the distinction derives part of its power from the fact that it is a metaphor. Its connotations, like those of the distinction between hard and soft, giving and receiving, outside and inside, spread across seemingly unbridgeable categorial distinctions, such as those between agriculture, the cosmos, forms of art, forms of clothing. Even the 'hard core' of biological difference is porous. In different cultures the meaning of sexual organs is extremely divergent, and culturally determined modifications of them, like circumcision, are quite common. These transformations should be understood within a network of cosmological connections which have to be considered as family ties.¹ Only through the weaving of these innumerable threads can we realize the nature of our kinship (which includes both familiarity and strangeness) with other cultures.²

If the variations of human nature are endless, the nature of our understanding of it will share that characteristic. Intercultural comparisons are

¹ Wittgenstein himself has applied the idea of family resemblance to intercultural comparison in the following way:

"Das Auffallendste scheint mir ausser den Aehnlichkeiten die Verschiedenheit aller dieser Riten zu sein. Es ist eine Mannigfaltigkeit von Gesichtern mit gemeinsamen Zügen, die da und dort immer wieder auftauchen. Und was man tun möchte ist, Linien ziehen, die die gemeinsamen Bestandteile verbinden. Es fehlt dann noch ein Teil der Betrachtung und es ist der, welcher dieses Bild mit unsern eigenen Gefühlen und Gedanken in Verbindung bringt. Dieser Teil gibt der Betrachtung ihre Tiefe" (BFB 246).

² It is gratifying to perceive that a similar criticism of reductive unity, and of atomistic relativism in a notion of the metamorphic unity of mankind, has been defended by the anthropologist Geertz:

"Generalizations [about man as man] are not to be discovered through a Baconian search for cultural universals[...] What, after all, does it avail us to say, with Herkovits, that 'morality is a universal, and so is enjoyment of beauty, and some standard for truth,' if we are forced in the very next sentence, as he is, to add that 'the many forms these concepts take are but products of the particular historical experience of the societies that manifest them'? Once one abandons uniformitarianism[...]relativism is a genuine danger; but it can be warded off only by facing directly and fully the diversities of human culture[...]and embracing them within the body of one's concept of man, not by gliding past them with vague tautologies and forceless banalities" (IC 40-41).

not objective assessments of fact. They are the rivalling speeches of family members during a family reunion. The points of view will inevitably vary according to the position of the speakers in the structure of kinship. The speeches will be disputed and commented upon—they will mirror the variations which constitute the broken unity of the family. The effect of the speeches will not be that mutual understanding or harmony is increased, nor that any speaker will undermine the position of any listener. Perhaps the ineradicable differences between the family branches which are so familiar to each other will be realized, together with the fact that it is impossible to separate familiarity from obscurity. Even if each speaker realizes his partiality, each is convinced of the superiority of his point of view. So are we.

1.2. Premises of our method

Structural anthropology has its roots in phonetic theory (AS 404), which proved that all spoken human languages can be analyzed into particles which the science of phonetics considers devoid of meaning (the phonemes), but by whose differentiation and combination all natural languages can be built up. It is characteristic of structures in both linguistics and anthropology that the meaning of elements is not perceived as being embodied in these elements themselves, but in their relations of inclusion and exclusion within the system. The relations logically precede the relata. As Lévi-Strauss maintains of anthropology: just as in linguistics, its focus is on “*écarts différentiels*” (AS 358).

Wherever people communicate (and communication is used in a very wide sense by Lévi-Strauss, including the exchange of goods, of words and of women through matrimonial arrangements) the signs they employ may be conventional in themselves, but the systems in which they are used are by no means arbitrary. It is, for example, a matter of convention that one road sign reads ‘stop’ and another ‘go’. But within the system of traffic control the difference has to be marked one way or another. Though it is arbitrary on the level of the terms, the system is coherent when it is taken as a whole (PS 74, cf. AS 105). In Lévi-Strauss’ conception, structures do not organize empirical reality directly. They form the systematics of models (comparable to Kantian schemes) which reconstruct empirical reality (AS 305-06). For example, the actual kinship relations in a society are condensed in models. The principles underlying these models form the organizing structure which accounts for their internal cohesion (AS II 28).

The comparison between phonetics and anthropology may easily lead to misunderstandings because it tends to obliterate a fundamental dif-

ference between the two disciplines. Phonetic units are without meaning. Anthropology on the other hand concerns structures on a higher level, that of semantic relevance. The semantic level can be found in language as a system of communication. It is impossible to deduce this system from phonetics and syntax alone. Phonology needs grammar and grammar needs lexical knowledge, which in turn is dependent upon ethnographic observation (AS II 169). In the eyes of Lévi-Strauss all these levels can be studied structurally, which means that, contrary to the opinion of many of his critics, structures need not be, and in anthropology are not, devoid of content. Structural anthropology is a semantic study. Its structures are not reduced to meaningless elements, they are reorganizations of content: "Structures do not possess a distinct content: they themselves are the content, comprehended in a logical organization which is conceived as a property of reality" (AS II 139). Structuralism is not formalism, it is a novel way of conceiving content. It translates content into structure without neglecting or impoverishing it (MC 401). This is to say that structuralism is not reductionism (PS 328), but tries to account for the whole of semantic meaning.³

It should be noted that there is a crucial difference between Lévi-Strauss' structures and Wittgenstein's family resemblances. The rules which determine identities as family resemblances are themselves historical and liable to change. This means that Wittgenstein does not view the identity of family members as fixed: the family grows and dies off, which affects the very identity of each member (as he expressed it: not only the water of facts flows, but its conceptual banks change as well – UG 95-99). Lévi-Strauss sometimes tends to describe structures as a-historic, as timeless moulds for change (AS 30-31). This conception means that structural elements themselves are unchangeable. As Derrida argues, this in its turn implies the risk that the metaphorical games of history, affecting the heart of structures, are neglected in favour of timeless geometrical models (ED 29). For example, Lévi-Strauss sometimes seems to assume that there are two distinct levels in human relations: timeless structures and the history of their divergent combinations.

³ This implies that we disagree with many forms of hermeneutic criticism of Lévi-Strauss, for example Kirk's objections to the syntactical nature of structuralism (M 43), Burkert's criticism that Lévi-Strauss is not able to distinguish relevant from irrelevant structures (SHM 12-14), Douglas' remarks that structuralism is vulnerable because it employs a "lemon squeezer technique" (IM 166), and Ricœur's difficulty that structuralism expounds "un formalisme absolu" (CI 54), having opted for syntax rather than semantics (CI 44), but nevertheless has to operate with semantic analogies, and therefore needs hermeneutic intelligence (CI 58-59). Lévi-Strauss would not feel threatened by these remarks, because he would agree with his critics' points of view on semantics.

In social relations the fundamental system of kinship, consisting of the relationships father/son, brother/brother, husband/wife would be an unchanging hard core. The family resemblance view on the other hand maintains that such a distinction between the a-historical and change cannot be made. The cultural context asserts that the very structure of the relationship between fathers and sons in Victorian Europe is different from that in the South Sea islands.

This does not mean, however, that structural relations have to be discarded altogether, and that every possibility of intercultural comparison is precluded *a priori*: the transcultural structure father/son exists, as a family resemblance. Without the family resemblance between fathers from divergent cultures a cultural relativism—which is in fact a victory for one's own cultural preconceptions—would inevitably ensue.

If language cannot be reduced to syntax, the same is true, with a vengeance, for myth and tragedy. Myth is different from direct use of language. It is a manipulation, in a meta-language, of what is signified in normal language as part of a new significant structure (AS II 170). When a myth tells us about a queen and a shepherd, there is more at stake than a description of such people. They are also vehicles of 'deeper' categorical differentiations, such as that between high and low, male and female. What structuralism maintains is that myths in general have such a surplus of meaning, that they embody more significance than their overt content suggests. Their structure carries concealed information. This implies that the structural elements of myths, the mythemes, are by no means devoid of significance:

[mythemes] result from a play of binary or ternary oppositions [...] But they do so among elements which are already full of signification at the level of the language [...] and which can be expressed by words of the vocabulary. (Lévi-Strauss SA II 143) (Fr. AS II 171)

It also implies a corollary which is of major significance in our interpretation of Sophocles' *Antigone*: in a structural interpretation mythical personalities are not primarily individuals interesting from a psychological point of view. Like linguistic elements, they are focuses in which categorial differentiations are reflected:

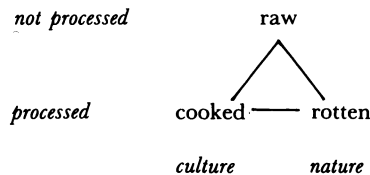
Thus, a "universe of the tale" will be progressively defined, analyzable in pairs of oppositions, diversely combined within each character who—far from constituting a single entity—is a bundle of different elements, in the manner of the phoneme as conceived by Roman Jakobson. (Lévi-Strauss SA II 135) (Fr. AS II 162)

We will approach Greek tragedy in a similar way, not primarily concerning ourselves with the characters and their psychology, but with the

cosmological relations that the characters stand for, such as those between man, nature and the gods (cf. Segal TC 8).

The final aim of these analyses of deep differentiations is, for Lévi-Strauss as well as for us, to establish hidden similarities within and between myths and tragedies which at first sight have little in common (OMT 164). (See appendix on the relationship between myth and tragedy). We hope to show that the *Antigone* reveals several aspects of meaning if various levels of differentiation, transformation and analogy are studied. It is possible to distinguish the level of imagery, that of different parts of the play (*stasima* and *episodia* among themselves and with respect to each other), the narrative logic which governs the sequence of events (cf. Vernant MSG 246-47), and the relations between the characters.

One of the most common objections to structuralism concerns its rigid preoccupation with binary oppositions which can be expressed in + or -. A good example is the famous culinary triangle: the most obvious changes which occur in food, cooking and rotting, can be structurally opposed in a triangle which expresses two oppositions, that between nature and culture, and that between non-processed and processed. Cooked food may be thought of as raw food processed by cultural means, whereas rotten food is raw or cooked food transformed by natural means. From these binary oppositions the triangle may be constructed as follows:



The work of Lévi-Strauss sometimes gives the impression that all systems of classification proceed along binary lines (cf. PS 287). Such claims have to be taken with several grains of salt. In the first place, as Lévi-Strauss himself is the first to admit, the signs + and - are employed with variable meanings, dependent upon the context, for example: presence/absence, relevance/irrelevance. They may also designate gradual differences (more/less) (MC 74) and even qualitative similarities and dissimilarities. In the second place it is clear that, besides binary coding, Lévi-Strauss employs other ways of structuring, for instance a logic of mediation. Finally, binary systems work better in some contexts than in others (Kirk M 78-80, Leach LS 87-88)—but the success of structuralism does not depend on them. For this kind of interpretation, the information which is concealed in “*écarts différentiels*,” however they are coded, is essential.

Notwithstanding these reservations, binary coding is a powerful heuristic tool which has proved its mettle, not only in the interpretation of 'primitive' cultures but in that of ancient Greek culture as well. The constant Greek preoccupation with contrasted categories like human/divine, male/female, old/young, etc. (Humphreys AG 203, Lloyd PA 7, Austin ADM 90ff, esp. 120) has prompted Vidal-Naquet to remark: "La pensée antique a très largement devancée l'analyse structurale moderne" (CN 192). As we shall see in the following chapters, the *Antigone* is a typical product of Greek culture in that it is permeated with dichotomies (Rosivach TWA 21) and structural polarities (Winnington-Ingram SI 140, 147).

It is a fundamental tenet of the structural approach that people need not be conscious of the meaningful relations which are detected in behaviour or myth. This may sound strange to those accustomed to considering meaning and conscious intention as having an identical field of application. That view can be proved to be untenable, however. Quite often people follow meaningful rules without being able to state them. The grammatical rules of the Greek language, for example, were followed even when there was no explicit grammar. There is no reason to believe that people are more conscious of rules which govern behaviour than of grammatical rules. Chagnon, for example, emphasizes the functional ignorance of the Yānomamō Indians with respect to their incest taboos and the social meaning of trading and feasting (YFP 124-25, 151).

This is also true of texts like tragedies. Here as elsewhere it is impossible and unnecessary to determine which structural relations were present in the poet's mind and which were not (cf. Segal TC 20). What structuralism aims at, is to detect those structures which are present in the content of the story, and especially in the patterned arrangement of its elements (Leach LOS 71).

As an example we shall outline a possible structural interpretation of two well-known Biblical texts (cf. Leach LOS 68ff.). We must emphasize that we are merely attempting a preliminary sketch of a structural interpretation confined to the stage of the construction of hypotheses: it is a serious problem for structural interpretations of the Bible, such as Leach's, that there is a scarcity of material that might confirm such a structural interpretation (related texts, ethnographic and historical data).

Everyone is familiar with the story of Abraham who was admonished by God to sacrifice his only legitimate son Isaac (Gen. 22: 1-18). Somewhat less familiar is the story of Jephthah (Ju. 11). Jephthah was expelled by his brothers because his mother was a harlot. When Gilead was attacked by the Ammonites, Jephthah was called back, and appointed as

the head of Gilead. He vowed that, if he returned victorious, he would sacrifice the first person to come out of his house. Unexpectedly his only daughter came out, and Jephthah was reluctantly compelled to sacrifice her.

The structuralist will try to look through the surface similarity of the stories. This consists of the fact that both concern a successful leader who has only one or at least only one legitimate child, which he has to sacrifice. But the differences are also important, as the stories end in opposite ways. Abraham expected to sacrifice his son, but was presented with a ram as substitute. Jephthah expected to sacrifice anyone but his daughter, but had to offer her to God. This may be connected with a second opposition. Abraham would have countless descendants, whereas Jephthah would have none (it is specified that his daughter knew no man). This points to a structural analogy which might be phrased thus: animal sacrifice: human sacrifice :: descendants: no descendants. There may be a connection between human sacrifice without substitution and the punishment of remaining without progeny.

In addition, it is a striking point that the sacrificial situations are each other's opposite in another respect. Jephthah had made a vow of his own accord, and was subsequently bound to an oath which suggests hubris: "I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back" (Ju. 11: 35). Abraham on the other hand only silently obeyed God, and remained full of confidence: "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22: 8). This may be connected with another opposition: Jephthah appointed himself head of the inhabitants of Gilead (Ju. 11: 9), whereas Abraham waited patiently until God made a covenant with him (Gen. 17: 2). We may therefore add a third opposition to our scheme:

patience : self-will

Perhaps the last-mentioned opposition is repeated in another aspect of the story: the pregnant silence of the victim Isaac, which is the opposite of the wailing of Jephthah's daughter. The last difference between the stories which might be relevant is that earlier Abraham had come to terms with his brother Lot, whereas Jephthah was expelled by his brothers as the son of a harlot. These differences are summed up the following list of oppositions:

Abraham

expects human sacrifice
obtains substitute

Jephthah

does not expect human sacrifice
does not obtain substitute

does not execute	has to execute human sacrifice
human sacrifice	
is patient towards God	is not patient towards God
is appointed by God	is a self-appointed leader
the victim is silent	the victim is wailing
has normal family ties	has abnormal family ties

In this series of oppositions a deeper opposition may be hidden, for example that between prudence and hubris. Hubris is punished by eradication from the earth. Of course, all this is mere hypothesis: it needs confirmation by historical and ethnographic sources, and by related Biblical myths surrounding extinction and foundation of families, human sacrifice, patience and hubris.

Lévi-Strauss' most original contribution to the understanding of myth is that he is not satisfied with the detection of oppositions, but subsequently connects them by a process called transformation. Transformation takes place within a myth when its syntagmatic chain (its story line) is broken up into segments embodying contrasts, and when these contrasts are compared with each other as bearing analogous information. The story then appears as a palimpsest of superimposed metaphoric transformations (Leach CC 25). In this way similarities may be found in apparently divergent aspects of a story (AS II 28). The same holds for differences between myths, which appear as variations on a theme—the differentiation of elements concealing deep analogies (cf. PS 72).

The social group can code the message without any alteration in its context by means of different lexical elements: as a categoric opposition: high/low, or as an elemental one: sky/earth, or again as a specific one: eagle/bear. And equally it has the choice of several syntactic procedures to assure the transmission of the message: nomenclature, emblems, modes of behaviour, prohibitions etc. used either alone or together. (Lévi-Strauss SM 149-50) (Fr. PS 197-98)

For Lévi-Strauss, transformations are of an algebraic nature; they constitute homologies. In his eyes the meaning of categories is unaffected by their transformations into each other. Transformations between systems of natural species and social groups, for example, or between parts of the human body and social stratification, are called "logical or formal equivalences" (PS 138). In the light of our family resemblance conception we are convinced that transformations from one category to another are not merely algebraic, however. They imply variations in meaning in the categories themselves. Transformations undermine the unity of the categories. They consist of homologies, which cannot be exhaustively

rendered in algebraic formulas. The idea of transformation may be illustrated by the example of the myths surrounding the Labdacids in Thebes, as analyzed by Lévi-Strauss. His description may go astray in many details, but its fundamental conception is profound and rich, as Vernant's discussion of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* has made clear (MTG 101ff.).

Lévi-Strauss maintains that the Theban cycle of myths centres around two pairs of oppositions, one between "rapports de parenté sur-estimés" and "rapports de parenté sous-estimés," and the other between the idea that man is born from the earth and its denial, viz. the idea that man is born from two parents (AS 236ff.). In order to make clear that we take kinship in a wide sense, including filiation, marriage and consanguinity, we prefer to term the first opposition that of 'extreme fusions' to 'extreme fissions.' Because of the many uncertainties which surround the second opposition (for example, the puns on names which Lévi-Strauss mentions as evidence for the opposition are highly dubious - Bremmer OOC 42) we have replaced it by another opposition which is of crucial importance in the Theban myths, that between extreme 'culturedness' and extreme 'naturalness'. In schematic form the following episodes (mythemes) can be distinguished in the myths connected with the Theban royal house.

<i>fusion</i>	<i>fission</i>	<i>culture</i>	<i>nature</i>
Cadmus marries Harmonia daughter of immortals	Cadmus is exiled by his father	Cadmus is founder of Thebes	Spartoi are born from dragon's teeth
	Cadmus incites Spartoi to kill each other		Cadmus and Harmonia are transformed into snakes
Actaeon courts Artemis	Actaeon refuses normal marriage		Actaeon is killed by his dogs in wild nature
Semele mates with Zeus	Semele is scorned by her sisters	Semele's sisters found thiasoi of Dionysus	Semele's sisters roam the wild
Semele and Zeus conceive Dionysus			

<i>fusion</i>	<i>fission</i>	<i>culture</i>	<i>nature</i>
	Polydorus insults Dionysus	Polydorus is king of Thebes	Polydorus is exiled to nature
Agave marries the spartos Echion	Her son Pentheus expels his uncle Polydorus	Pentheus is king of Thebes	
	Pentheus insults Semele and Dionysus		
	Pentheus is killed by his mother		Pentheus dies like an animal in wild nature
			Agave is expelled to wild nature
Ino goes off secretly with Athamas	Ino persecutes her step-children		
	Athamas kills his son Learchus		
	Athamas expels Ino and their son Melicertes		Ino and Melicertes die in wild nature
Antiope mates with Zeus and begets the twins Zethus and Amphion	Antiope is persecuted by her father and goes into exile		Zethus and Amphion are exposed in wild nature
			Zethus and Amphion are brought up by a shepherd
Antiope secretly marries the king of Sicyon	Antiope is locked up by her uncle Lycus	Lycus is King of Thebes	Antiope and Dirce roam wild nature
Zethus and Amphion take Lycus' throne and	Zethus and Amphion kill their uncle Lycus and Dirce. They expel Laius	Zethus and Amphion build the walls of	Zethus and Amphion tie Dirce to a wild bull

<i>fusion</i>	<i>fission</i>	<i>culture</i>	<i>nature</i>
reign together		Thebes. Amphion is master of the lyre	
Zethus and Amphion share the same grave			
Amphion's wife Niobe compares her offspring to the gods	Zethus' wife Aedon kills her son	Zethus' wife Thebe gives her name to the city	Niobe is changed into a rock; Aedon is transformed into a bird
Laius abducts the boy Chrysippus	Chrysippus is killed by his mother	Laius introduces ritual pederasty; teaches the charioteer's art to Chrysippus; Laius is king of Thebes	Laius is harassed by the Sphinx
Iocaste seduces Laius while he is drunk	Laius does not want children		
	Oedipus is rejected by his parents		Oedipus is exposed in wild nature
Oedipus sits on his father's throne Oedipus marries his mother	Oedipus kills his father Iocaste commits suicide	Oedipus saves Thebes Oedipus is king of Thebes	Oedipus conquers the Sphinx Oedipus brings disease to Thebes
	Oedipus curses his sons		Oedipus is called wild
	Oedipus is expelled from Thebes		Oedipus roams wild nature
Polyneices and Eteocles	Pol. and Et. quarrel over	Pol. and Et. are rulers	

<i>fusion</i>	<i>fission</i>	<i>culture</i>	<i>nature</i>
reign together	kingship	of Thebes	
Pol. marries into a foreign household with a foreigner	Polyneices is exiled by his brother		
Pol. and Et. share a common death	Pol. and Et. kill each other		Pol. and Et. are wild. The body of Pol. is ravaged by wild animals
Antigone joins her father in exile	Antigone refuses to marry		Ant. and Oed. roam wild nature
Antigone buries the body of her brother Polyneices	Ant. disobeys her uncle Creon	Ant. defends the honour of the Labdacids	Ant. is called raw
	Creon leaves Pol. unburied	Creon saves Thebes	Creon becomes wild and brings disease to Thebes; Ant. dies in wild nature
	Creon buries Ant. alive		
Creon tries to save his son Menoeceus against the interest of the city	Menoeceus commits suicide, against the wish of Creon	Menoeceus saves Thebes	Menoeceus dies in the dragon's den
	Antigone commits suicide		
	Eurydice commits suicide		
Haemon secretly mar-	The son of Ant. and Haemon is		The son of Ant. and

<i>fusion</i>	<i>fission</i>	<i>culture</i>	<i>nature</i>
ries Antigone	killed by Creon		Haemon bears the mark of the dragon
	Haemon kills Ant. and himself		
	Ant. and Ism. are killed by the son of Eteocles		

Of course we shall confine ourselves to a few salient points from the immensely complex knot of myths surrounding the Labdacids; the scheme only serves as an illustration of the process of transformation. In order to turn it into a true structural analysis, first of all the dates of the myths have to be taken into account. We have derived the data for this scheme from the works of various authors, ranging from Homer (8th century B.C.) to Pausanias (2nd century A.D.). Naturally, various historical factors may account for differences between the versions of the myths.⁴

Secondly, a serious analysis has to take account of the divergent versions of the myths. When that is done, important sets of transformations may come to light, not within the syntagmatic chain of the story, but within its range of variations. For example, in Sophocles' version Antigone gives up her intended marriage to Haemon in order to bury her brother Polyneices. In Euripides' *Phoenissae* however, she gives up her marriage in order to follow her father Oedipus into exile (Phoen 1673ff., esp. 1684). These versions may be considered analogous: in both, Antigone refuses to sever the ties with her family (fusion), implying that she refuses to join her husband's family (fission).

A third source of information indispensable in creating a true structural interpretation is that of the historical and ethnographic context. Once we know that in classical Greece suicide was considered a form of kinslaying, and kinslaying a form of suicide, it becomes understandable that the various suicides in the Theban myths have deep analogies with the fratricides and parricides which the same myths also abound with.

⁴ But the fact that an episode is unknown before a certain author mentions it—for example the fact that we know of no predecessor of Sophocles' where the episode of Antigone trying to bury Polyneices is concerned—does not prove the originality of that author. It is quite possible that the versions of later mythographers like Apollodorus (Bibl. 3.7.1.) or Pausanias (9.25.2), are derived from older sources (Petersmann MGS *passim*).

In any case, one glance at the scheme shows how attractive it is to view the Theban myths as an extended set of transformations of transgressions of normal kinship ties in two directions: connecting what should remain separate, separating what should remain connected. Such a hypothesis may highlight interesting analogies, such as that between Oedipus' fusion with his mother in bed, the fusion of Eteocles and Polyneices in their reign and in the grave, and Antigone's extreme loyalty to members of her family, especially Oedipus and Polyneices. And transformation does not always operate by simple analogy—another important mode is that of inversion. It might be informative to regard extreme social fusions as the counterparts of extreme fissions (for example: Oedipus' marriage to his mother and his slaying of his father). This sort of transformation may also occur between divergent versions of the myth. While in Sophocles' *Antigone* and in Euripides' *Phoenissae* Antigone refuses to marry Haemon (fission), it seems that in Euripides' lost *Antigone* she married him in an abnormal way, in secrecy—an extreme fusion (Schol. Soph Ant 1351). In the opposed versions the same structure of fusion and fission is detectable.

With respect to the second opposition, that between culture and nature, there seems to be a strange connection in the Theban myths between the fact that these myths on the one hand concern culture heroes, people in high places upon whose status society and culture are dependent (kingship, invention of techniques), and the fact that on the other hand they also almost invariably concern themselves with wild, raw and even monstrous qualities and relations of these same heroes. In the final analysis the unorthodox social relations of these kings and princesses may prove to be analogous to the fact that their status is both super-human (god-like) and sub-human (animal-like).

These transformations can be extended in various ways, for instance to the category of insight. One example may suffice. Oedipus fuses social relations which should remain apart: that of father, husband and son. The riddle of the Sphinx consists of a similar fusion (cf. Aristotle: an enigma is a description of a fact by words which cannot be fused ἀδύνατα συνάψαι – Poet. 1458a26f.): that of child, adult and old man. The solving of the riddle is a fission, but ironically this fission is revealed by Oedipus, the fuser of social roles. We shall argue that problems such as social transgressions and paradoxes of culture and nature determine the deep structure of a particular version of a single episode from the Theban myths: Sophocles' *Antigone*.

We agree with Lévi-Strauss when he maintains that myths are centred around contradictions, not in the sense of incompatible propositions, but

in the sense of living paradoxes. They concern questions like 'How could there be a first man and a first woman who were not also brother and sister?', 'How can one reconcile a desire for immortality with a knowledge of the certainty of impending death?', 'How is it that human beings are animals (natural) on the one hand and on the other hand not-animals (cultural)?' (Leach LOS 67-68). We also agree with Lévi-Strauss when he states that these contradictions are often unsolvable (AS 254). But Lévi-Strauss believes that myths overcome contradictions by a procedure of 'mediation'. According to this view, mythical thinking leans towards a progressive mediation of oppositions which have become conscious (AS 248), a mediation whose function would be to design a logical model for resolving contradictions (AS 254, OMT 187). Here we disagree. Certainly the strain of contradiction may sometimes be eased by the revelation of a *tertium quid* (Kirk NM 84-88), but that does not happen in all myths, or even in the majority of them. Quite often they just expound a contradiction, without a trace of the typically European need to mitigate living paradox by harmonization. In the Oedipus myth, for example, there is no evidence for Lévi-Strauss' thesis, that it is an attempt to bridge the gap between the thought that man springs from the earth and the fact that he is born from the union of man and woman (AS 239) (cf. de Ruijter SD 99). The classical Oedipus myth is full of contradictions, but totally devoid of harmony. What is often true of myth is almost always the case in Sophoclean tragedies—they contain nothing but the revelation of divided man in a divided cosmos:

Tragedy stresses less the unifying, synthesizing capacity of a mediator than the problematical and paradoxical status of the figure who stands at the point where opposites converge. Such a figure may assume contradictory attributes simultaneously[...] Tragedy is the form of myth which explores the ultimate impossibility of mediation by accepting the contradiction between the basic polarities that human existence confronts. (Segal TC 21)

Lévi-Strauss' partiality for mediation is connected with a second weakness in his theory. Through his concentration on binary opposition and mediation (he maintains that whatever is not founded on dichotomies is meaningless – PS 228) he omits to account for the spheres outside and between binary oppositions, i.e. the marginal, and for what constitutes both the common ground of oppositions and undermines them at the same time, i.e. the ambiguous.

On the one hand, Lévi-Strauss tends to speak of mediation when in fact only marginality is concerned. Why, for example, should a carrion-eater be a mediator between predators and herbivores, and not simply a marginal animal without mediating function? (AS 248-49). This can be illustrated by the example of the culinary triangle: this system of binary

oppositions is only adequate where the processing of fruit or vegetables is concerned. With respect to a carnivorous diet complications arise as soon as we ask what position should be assigned to raw meat. In the process of butchering, the animal has already lost part of its natural character: flesh has been transformed into meat. But raw meat is not really civilized; to become civilized it has to be cooked. Rawness of meat thus forms a paradigmatic instance of marginality—yet it need not mediate at all between nature and culture.

On the other hand, Lévi-Strauss seems to consider ambiguity something which is merely in the eye of the beholder. This transpires from his treatment of *mana* and related concepts in the work of Mauss. He acknowledges that such notions have to do with indiscriminate power which cannot be enclosed in structural oppositions (IOM xliv). He calls this ambiguous power the “*signifiant flottant*” (IOM xlix) which enslaves human thinking, but is also the point of departure of art, poetry and myth. Where we take issue with Lévi-Strauss is when he maintains that the force of ambiguity only derives from the order of thinking, not from that of reality (IOM xlvii). This is why he reduces it to a “*valeur symbolique zéro*” (IOM l) which should be disciplined in both science and magical thinking (xlix), but which in reality is superfluous (xl). Here Lévi-Strauss betrays his scientific metaphysics: he supposes that reality is divided *a priori* into clear-cut structures. We defend the opposite view: the ever present “supplementary ration” of *signifiants* which man possesses (xlix) is made necessary by the ambiguity of reality. We shall defend the idea that the marginality and ambiguity pervading structural order both engender and destroy structures. That is why they form fundamental cosmological problems. As such they constitute a substantial part of the subject matter of myths and tragedy (Girard VS 335). Because myth and tragedy are ‘meta-languages’ which manipulate the elements of ordinary language, they are able to distort the existing structural oppositions, thus revealing fundamental ambiguities (Segal DP 25).

This implies, however, that structural knowledge itself will inevitably be tinged with the ambiguities it is confronted with. Lévi-Strauss’ quasi-mathematical formulas tend to emphasize order at the expense of that ambiguous power that, as we shall argue in the third chapter, both engenders and undermines order (cf. Derrida ED 29, 35-49). Knowledge which tries to account for ambiguous power will, up to a certain point, become ambiguous as well: the order of knowledge is intrinsically incapable of mastering ambiguous power completely.

A serious question concerning structuralist interpretation is: how can its hypotheses be proved wrong? Sometimes structuralism seems to have

developed into something like a self-fulfilling prophecy, incapable of being seriously tested, because *ad hoc* reasoning is added every time an inexplicable case occurs or a piece of counterevidence turns up (Leach LS 117). Most readers will agree that there are no 'crucial experiments' in comparing rival interpretative theories, and that there is no solid basis of independent fact: the 'facts' are partly constituted by and coloured in the light of the preconceived interpretative theory. Nevertheless this does not condemn interpretation to arbitrary *Spielerei*. Serious discussion between rival interpretative schools should not be precluded. Here we should like to establish some guide-lines for such a discussion.

When we say that a basic criterion of a successful interpretation is 'unity of meaning' most interpreters will agree with us—but this criterion does not mean much. Something more is implied in the remark that suppositions concerning the whole (e.g. the myth or body of myths) should hold good for as many parts (e.g. mythemes) as possible. But even then the meaning of 'whole' and of the 'unity of whole and parts' is vague. The notion of unity we are employing here is totally different from, even opposed to, the reductive unity which is the aim of the natural sciences. The unity of an interpretation, like that of its subject, is the unity of a family: a patterned whole of connections, oppositions, harmonies. Perhaps we should call it interconnectedness. The more interconnected the elements of myths and tragedies appear, the better the interpretation. This aim of metaphoric unity has been rendered in a masterly fashion by Cleanth Brooks:

The structure meant is a structure of meanings, evaluations and interpretations; and the principle of unity which informs it seems to be one of balancing and harmonizing connotations, attitudes and meanings. But even here one needs to make important qualifications: the principle is not one which involves the arrangement of various elements into homogeneous groupings, pairing like with like. It unites the like with the unlike. It does not unite them, however, by the simple process of allowing one connotation to cancel out another nor does it reduce the contradictory attitudes to harmony by a process of subtraction. The unity is not a unity of the sort to be achieved by the reduction and simplification appropriate to an algebraic formula. (Cleanth Brooks WWU 178-79)

A similar attitude is taken by Lévi-Strauss, when he rejects the possibility of a 'Cartesian' separation and unification as the final aim of the study of myth, because the themes are endlessly doubled.

The study of myths raises a methodological problem, in that it cannot be carried out according to the Cartesian principle of breaking down the difficulty into as many parts as may be necessary for finding the solution. There is no real end to mythological analysis, no hidden unity to be grasped once the breaking-down process has been completed. Themes can be split

up *ad infinitum*. Just when you think you have disentangled and separated them, you realize that they are knitting together again in response to the operation of unexpected affinities.(CC 13)

A major implication of this statement is that structural knowledge never reaches a state of complete clarity and distinctness. It belongs to a history in which both texts and interpretations are involved, which makes this knowledge forever changeable and saturated with opacity, yet unable to take that history into account. But here a second criterion should be brought into the discussion, a criterion which serves as a watchdog against an undue expansion of interconnectedness. The interpreter has to be careful not to impose his own interesting ideas on a text which does not answer to them. One important criterion therefore is: does a presumed opposition or analogy recur in other parts of the text, or in similar texts? This recurrence of a theme need not be literal—it may consist of reversals, metaphors, etc. But a proposed theme should not be unique; it must belong to a pattern. When we read and re-read the *Antigone*, a myriad possible connections and oppositions crossed our minds—but only a few were acceptable because they formed a recurring pattern. It is tempting to think of the culinary triangle if one reads that Antigone is called “raw,” whereas the body of her brother is called “rotting”. But the hypothesis of a connection between the two passages has to be discarded unless we find further hints of the culinary triangle in the rest of the text.

When, in his interpretation of the meaning of Eurydice in the *Antigone*, Segal compares this character to the goddess Earth (TC 194), he has only one citation to support his claim: that she is called “all-mother” (παμμήτωρ – Ant 1282). Without additional evidence, this is idle speculation. The same holds true for Segal’s comparison of Antigone to a perverted Kore (TC 180). The only evidence he adduces is that Antigone is called “bride of Hades”; but that was commonly said of and carved on the graves of Greek women who died before marriage. There should be independent evidence of a connection between Antigone and Kore to make Segal’s claims acceptable. On the other hand, the hypothesis that the social fusions and fissions of the Labdacids are connected with their close contact with nature is confirmed so frequently, not only in the *Antigone*, but in related Greek tragedies and myths as well, that we consider it almost beyond doubt. The subsequent application of such a confirmed hypothesis to dark passages, e.g. that passage in which Antigone is called a raw offspring of a raw father, may provide some clarification.

That recurrence can serve as a touchstone of a structural interpretation of myth and tragedy not only points to the fact that the mythical way of thinking is generally repetitive, in that sequences of events recur time

and again. It also points to the fact that repetitiveness must be an indispensable characteristic of myth if structural interpretation is to make any sense. It is only through repetition of similar episodes that the deep structure of a myth, which demands 'vertical reading,' can be unveiled. Only repetition guarantees the "structure feuilletée" of myth (Lévi-Strauss AS 254).

Lévi-Strauss has pointed out the fundamental fact that the 'leaves' of mythical episodes are never strictly identical. He explains this differentiation within the sequence of episodes by suggesting that the aim of myth is to offer a logical model for resolving (partly real) contradictions. According to Lévi-Strauss, this implies that a potentially endless series of 'leaves' will be generated, each slightly different from its predecessor. Again we have to supplement his penetrating remarks by arguing that frequently myths are not supposed to resolve real contradictions, but to put them before our eyes. In these cases the function of differentiation might be quite different. It may confront us with the real contradictions and ambiguities of life and the cosmos by the very process of transformation within repetition. We hope to show that this is what happens in the *Antigone*. It has often been remarked that in this tragedy episodes, choral songs, sequences of action, fates, images, words are repeated endlessly, in intricate variations, reversals and metamorphoses. We are convinced that these differential reiterations reveal the ambiguous meaning of the tragedy. Through the repetition of the fate of Antigone in the fate of Creon, the repeated description of man's place in the cosmos in the sequence of choral songs, and through an amazing number of repetitions of words and images, the non-psychological, non-romantic, non-personal, but cosmological meaning of the *Antigone* is revealed: the cosmology of ambiguity.

APPENDIX

Nobody will deny the differences between epic poetry, lyrical poetry and tragedy in ancient Greece. For example, only in tragedy are cosmological conflicts not narrated but acted out on the stage. Another difference is that tragedy is virtually confined to the end of the sixth and the whole of the fifth century, and therefore reflects the specific problems of those times. However, the fact that tragedy emerged and died within a very short space of time and was concerned with the questions of that specific time should not blind us to the almost flawless continuity in Greek cosmology as it manifests itself in the epic poetry of Homer, the lyrical poetry of Theognis, the historical investigations of Herodotus and Thucydides, and the tragedies of Sophocles (Lloyd-Jones JZ 144). Even

if we assume that Sophocles was arguing with philosophers like Protagoras we have to emphasize that he forcefully defends the "inherited conglomerate" (Dodds GI 179; Greene M 138-71). Therefore we do not agree with Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, who maintain that tragedy occupies the marginal space between two cosmologies, the archaic and the modern (MTG 7). They are right in emphasizing that tragedy was concerned with the fifth century problems of jurisdiction in the rising Greek polis and its opposition to older institutions (MTG 15), but in the epic and lyrical poetry we also find reflections of contemporary problems. There is no reason to believe that tragedy occupies an exceptional position in this respect. As Vernant and Vidal-Naquet themselves argue, the cosmology of the tragedians is primarily archaic (MTG 16): they apply ancient cosmological categories to new problems. But with the possible exception of Euripides the rise of philosophy and its new separative thinking had little or no influence on their basic outlook on the cosmos. Sophocles' problems of transgression, pollution, contradiction and ambiguity are similar to Homer's or Hesiod's, who provided the basis of Sophocles' ideas (Knox HT 50-51). Furthermore, epic poetry, lyrical poetry and tragedy all draw on the same mythical corpus. Greek myth does not coincide with any one of the literary genres (Graf GM 8); all belong together as manifestations of Greek mythical thinking (Graf GM 138). The fact that the tragedians take great liberties in their variations on the corpus of myth does not prove their distance from it (Vernant/Vidal-Naquet MTG 16), but proves that they belong to its tradition: all Greek authors wrote variations on the existing themes.

It is more fruitful to point out the continuity in Greek cosmology from Homer to Sophocles than to stress the alleged marginality of tragedy. In all genres the same fundamental cosmological issues are at stake: man's awkward position, divided and ambiguous, in a hard and ruthless world in which no Lévi-Straussian reconciliations are to be expected (cf. Gould SGR 24).

CHAPTER TWO

SEPARATIVE COSMOLOGIES

2.1. Fundamental cosmological categories

Cultures show family resemblances in the Wittgensteinian sense. One fundamental feature which cultures share, and through which they are akin, is the need for differentiation. By means of such widely divergent symbolic systems as myths and philosophies, magical practice and science, religious rituals and social rules, justice and language, all cultures endeavour to provide themselves with surroundings ordered in clearly distinguished categories. Only if we apply principles of differentiation, separating and ordering categories, can we hope to live in a meaningful world (cf. Girard VS 76ff). These categories can be specified as structures, as systems of *écarts différentiels*.¹

Without differentiation, man would be lost in a chaos of shifting impressions. His systems of classification have to be more or less rigid in order to maintain a minimum of stability (Douglas PD 36). Overwhelming evidence from all cultures corroborates the idea that it is part of the human condition to need clear lines and precise differences. What cannot be ordered is feared as the 'uncanny'.² Differentiation is not confined to the classifying abilities of language. It is performed in a wide variety of codes, for example in dress, in the preparation and consumption of food, in sexual regulations, in the use of discontinuities in space and time. We shall confine ourselves to those categories which are relevant from the point of view of philosophical anthropology, i.e. categories indispensable in order to describe human nature. Human nature is nothing 'in itself,' it exists as relations of inclusion and exclusion with respect to the fundamental constituents of the world. Anthropology is cosmology.

¹ The necessity of avoiding chaos by differentiation does not commit us to Kantian idealism, the viewpoint that without the structures of human intuition and understanding nature is but "the manifold of appearances" (KrV A 126-27). On the contrary, we are convinced that the power and order of the cosmos determine man's differentiating activities. Because man is only partly and inadequately acquainted with nature's ordinations, his categorizations are only faint imitations, which time and again have to be revised.

² Lévi-Strauss PS 16-17, Douglas PD 162. As Langer renders it; "[Man] can adapt himself somehow to anything his imagination can cope with, but he cannot deal with Chaos. Because his characteristic function and highest asset is conception, his greatest fright is to meet what he cannot construe—the 'uncanny', as it is popularly called" (Langer PK 287).

We do not pretend to delineate *the* elements of *the* human cosmology, but we are convinced that a family resemblance between our model of six cosmological categories and existing cosmologies will be detectable. Our scheme can be almost completely distilled from the following remark by the founding father of research concerning culture and civilization, Descartes' counterpart Vico (cf. Winch EA 43):

All [nations] have some religion, all contract solemn marriages, all bury their dead. And in no nation, however savage and crude, are any human actions performed with more elaborate ceremonies and more sacred solemnity than the rites of religion, marriage and burial[...] From these three institutions humanity began among them all, and therefore they must be most devoutly guarded by them all, so that the world should not again become a bestial wilderness (Vico NS 332-33)

Vico refers explicitly to three fundamental customs; implicitly more cosmological categories are at stake, however. First of all, Vico distinguishes civilized conditions from "savage and crude" ones. Natural circumstances form a "bestial wilderness" with which expression Vico alludes to the primordial cosmological difference between nature and culture. All over the world communities regard their civilization as a system of rules which differentiate it from dangerous, raw and wild nature. This demarcation is especially necessary where man himself has animal aspects.

Man does not merely distinguish himself from that which is 'below,' he is also different from that which is 'above,' the region which he neither possesses nor controls, which is mightier than his frail powers, that of the gods, our second category. Vico refers to the sacred solemnity of the rites of religion. By means of these rites man acknowledges his smallness and tries to win the favour of the divine powers, or to avoid the danger of self-deification.

Man's position is not merely that of an in-between on a vertical axis, between nature and the gods, his identity is also marked by differentiation on a horizontal line, a third category, his relations with his fellow-men. Not every social relation is relevant here, only those which are indispensable to the existence of human communities. Vico refers to the universal custom of contracting solemn marriages. Since the work of Lévi-Strauss we have been aware that this relation cannot be considered apart from other fundamental ties from which it is differentiated to form an articulated structure. In the vast majority of societies (for a possible exception cf. Leach SA 51) marriages are not contracted between those who are related by close ties of blood, either laterally (by consanguinity) or vertically (by filiation). Thus the relation between husband and wife

only exists as part of a threefold system of differences: marital alliance, consanguinity, filiation.

This threefold system of kinship is in its turn only identified by differentiation from two other fundamental relations. Vico refers to the "nations," the larger communities in which kinship ties develop, but which are not identical with them. Kinsmen and members of a community may be opposed to other communities: allies and enemies, foreigners and barbarians.

Besides the vertical and horizontal relations there is a temporal dimension which determines human life: the span between birth and death. These thresholds of life, which largely lie outside man's influence, give rise to the customs of burial to which Vico refers, and to parallel customs surrounding procreation and fertility.

In Vico's enumeration of fundamental customs a fifth category is hidden. He states that these customs must be "most devoutly guarded" by all societies if they are not to be reduced to bestial conditions, alluding to the fact that cosmologies need an integrative order, and that this order has to be protected by human measures of inclusion and exclusion, i.e. by law. In the following chapters we shall see that many societies opt for a moral order which embraces the whole cosmos, both in its human and in its natural aspects.

The most fundamental category is not referred to by Vico, perhaps because of its obviousness: man can only hope to maintain balance between the categories which determine his identity if he has the ability to gain insight. Without this quality there would be no religion, no marriage, no burial, no justice. There is an urgent need to separate insight from its concomitants obscurity and illusion: these might overthrow the whole cosmological edifice.

2.2. Aspects of separative cosmologies

All cultures differentiate, but their differentiations vary. Our question is: how? On arriving at a new camp, the Bushman wife differentiates by sticking a rod into the ground in order to orientate the fire by giving it a right side and a left side, and at the same time a male side and a female one. In another way, the European housewife differentiates when she establishes order in her home by keeping bathroom articles out of the dining room and vice versa. According to the anthropologist Douglas the difference is that between unity and disintegration of categories:

We moderns operate in many different fields of symbolic action. For the Bushman, Dinka and many primitive cultures, the field of symbolic action is one. The unity which they create by their separating and tidying is not

just a little home, but a total universe in which all experience is ordered[...]
 The difference between us is not that our behaviour is grounded on science and theirs on symbolism. Our behaviour also carries symbolic meaning. The real difference is that we do not bring forward from one context to the next the same set of ever more powerful symbols: our experience is fragmented. Our rituals create a lot of little subworlds, unrelated. Their rituals create one single, symbolically consistent universe. (PD 68-69, cf. Lévi-Strauss PS 352)

Douglas has pointed out a difference which is so fundamental that one can barely understand its importance, but we would formulate it somewhat differently. We hold that Europeans live in a unified cosmology no less than do the Bushmen, but that their modes of differentiation and unification are different. In Europe we are confronted with a cosmology which is based on separation of entities and categories and subsequent unification, whereas in the other cosmology entities and categories are distinguished as well, but the distinctions are not so absolute: they hide various implicit connections. The former type of cosmology is called separative, the latter interconnected. In order to understand this, we have to inquire into the nature of cosmological classification. Categorization is differentiation, but differentiation is not undertaken for its own sake. People differentiate to create categories, unifying principles which bring entities together under conceptual headings so that they can be classified as 'the same.' Differentiation and unification are complementary. But they embody opposing tendencies as well: whenever entities are arranged in different categories, their similarities tend to be effaced; whenever they are put together in one category, their differences are prone to disappear (Wisdom PP 274).

An important trend in European cosmology seeks to solve this paradox in a specific way: by separating entities from all obscurities until they are totally transparent, and by separating them from all implicit metaphorical comparisons with other things, until all entities are completely distinct from each other. The separation of the unclear from the clear, and of the indistinct from the distinct, takes the shape of an abstractive reduction, disregarding the diversity of the individual. Confusing aspects of entities are eliminated until a clear and distinct hard core has been distilled. Such a description does not speak of a 'threatening thunderstorm,' but of electric discharges which have been stripped of all connotations of fear or cosmic violence. Water has numerous associations: bathing, flooding, drinking, drowning. In a clear and distinct description it is stripped of these metaphorical garments until it is reduced to its molecular or atomic skeleton.

When abstractive reduction succeeds, it may turn out that the reduced entities are identical with respect to their hard core. Unification then

becomes feasible. The power of such unification is tremendous. Newton was able to unite falling apples and falling stars in one law of nature. The procedure of abstractive reduction and unification has exerted a deep influence on European thinking in all six categories that we have distinguished. When we speak of the Cartesian cosmology of Europe, it is because Descartes was its clearest exponent. We are not suggesting that this cosmology originated with Descartes: the idea of a unified cosmos of a more or less mechanical nature emerged in the twelfth century (Rad-ding SS 959), and Descartes was its product rather than its creator. Calling the Cartesian cosmology a cosmology of separative reduction and unification—in man's relation with nature, his gods, his fellow-men, life and death, order and law, and insight—implies agreement with Douglas when she describes an important trend in European cosmology as based on a low level of interconnectedness between categories.

As grid [= social interconnectedness] weakens, there will be increasing scope for scepticism about metaphysical principles and their fit to experience. There will be pressure to doubt any mutual support between theories about God, nature and morality[...]To tolerate disagreement, it will be necessary to separate politics from religion. The microcosm-to-macrocosm unity of knowledge will fall apart. Since in this cultural type there is no centre, each individual is centre to his own world.(CB 10)

But when we speak of separative and interconnected cosmologies, we are only referring to cosmological types, which never occur in a 'pure' state in any culture. Cultures always show a mixture of the separative and the interconnected, although they differ in their emphasis. European thinking cannot be reduced to procedures of separation only. Below the rational separations of European cosmology traces of interconnectedness are hidden, embodying a smouldering conflict with separateness. This conflict may come out into the open in that persistent thorn in the metaphysical flesh: tragedy.

In his *Discours de la méthode* Descartes imposes upon himself four methodical precepts. The first is to accept only those things as being true which are known clearly and distinctly.³ The second is to divide every problem in as many particles as possible in order to solve it. This is the method of abstractive separation by reduction. The other two precepts are intended to build up the unity of the world again. The investigator

³ "Distinctam autem illam [ideam voco], quae, cum clara sit, ab omnibus aliis ita se-juncta est et praecisa, ut nihil plane aliud, quam quod clarum est, in se contineat" (PP I.45).

is to begin with the simplest objects and progress to the more complicated ones, and he is to make his enumerations complete (DM 18-19).

The Cartesian method's first and foremost cosmological implication is a specific relation between man and nature. Descartes endeavours to separate what is perceptible and therefore changeable in nature from what remains constant and can therefore be known rationally. In his famous example of the piece of wax, he performs a reduction on all changeable features, which are detected by the senses and imagination, like sweetness, fragrance, colour, and shape (Med 31). What remains after this rational division is immutable extension. When the whole of nature is divided along these lines, dramatic implications ensue. Descartes stands in the tradition of Kepler, who reduced all aspects of the universe which might make it comparable to something organic and holy to an immense clockwork,⁴ stripped of vital and religious connotations. Whoever believes the clockwork to be animated confuses it with its maker. This reduction enabled Kepler to unify the cosmos under the banner of one simple force.

In a similar way Descartes stripped nature of all its resemblances to the organic and the divine. Essentially, nature is nothing but "nombre, poids et mesure," and acts mathematically. It is devoid of forces which would make it comparable to an organism.⁵ Unlike the scholastic *natura* and the Aristotelian *physis*, Descartes denies nature's divine power.

First of all, you must realize, that by Nature I do not mean a Goddess or another kind of imaginary power; but that I use this word to designate Matter itself. (AT XI 36-37)

Descartes by no means denies divine impact on nature. He is convinced that the whole of nature, even all mathematical truths, are permanently dependent upon God's *creatio continua*. According to his philosophy these spheres are only immutable because God decided so, and stands by his decision (AT VII 380). But here Descartes' rational separation comes to the fore. God upholds the whole of nature, but does not manifest himself *in* nature. He is the cause of nature as a whole, but does not influence individual chains of causation, otherwise clear and distinct knowledge of

⁴ "Scopus meus hic est, ut coelestem machinam non esse instar divini animalis, sed instar horologii (qui horologium credit esse animatum, is gloriam artificis tribuit operi), ut in qua pene omnis motuum varietas ab una simplicissima vi magnetica corporaci, uti in horologio motus omnes a simplicissimo pondere" (Letter dated Feb. 10, 1605, Op II 84).

⁵ "Ce que vous dites que la vitesse d'un coup de marteau surprend la Nature, en sorte qu'elle n'a pas loisir de joindre ses forces pour résister, est entièrement contre mon opinion; car elle n'a point de forces à joindre, ni besoin de temps pour cela, mais elle agit en tout mathématiquement" (to Mersenne, March 11, 1640, AT III 37).

nature would be impossible. God is transcendent and has no properties which can be found in nature.⁶

The Cartesian cosmology postulates a mechanical and internally secularized nature, implying that man possesses a great measure of freedom towards nature. If the universe is ordered in eternal laws there are no intrinsic limits to man's ability to obtain rational knowledge of nature. And if nature itself has no divine aspects, but is just matter, there are no moral limits to the conquest of nature. Man can become its "master and possessor" (DM 62).

Interconnected cosmologies do not know such a rational separation of nature from the divine: in them, nature is permeated with religious aspects. This does not preclude man's intervention in natural processes, but such technical knowledge touches on only one aspect of nature's divine power, which is conceived of as being essentially too powerful to be mastered.

In Descartes' cosmology the separation of the natural from the organic and the divine is, on a microcosmic scale, repeated in man himself. In Cartesian philosophy man is divided into two substances: extension and thought, the natural and the rational. Man's true essence is reached by abstractive reduction: only the thinking substance is essential, the natural is not. Man's essence is separated from his situation, from every material substance, even from his own body (DM 33). God's mastery of nature is repeated in man's mastery of his material aspects, and in his vicarious mastery of nature. There is one interesting implication of this ontological dualism which may be noted here: because of his rigorous and exhaustive separation of thinking and extension, Descartes rejects a separate category of life. To him, living organisms such as animals are nothing but machines belonging to the sphere of extension and having nothing to do with rationality (DM 56).

Descartes' abstractive methodology is also reflected in the relation between man and God. In essence the relation to God is reserved for man as a rational being. God is not reached by perception or imagination, he is a necessity of thought. When man realizes his finiteness, and opposes it to the idea of the infinite, which can be no mere negation of the finite, he realizes that there can only be an infinite cause of this idea: God. Here as elsewhere Descartes emphasizes God's transcendence, not only with respect to the world, but with respect to man as well. God's properties are exactly the opposite of man's: he is infinite, eternal, immovable, om-

⁶ AT VII 188: "Nihil eorum quae Deo tribuimus, ab objectis externis tanquam ab exemplari potest esse profectum, quia nihil est in Deo simile iis quae sunt in rebus externis."

niscient, almighty (DM 35), and he is purified from all possible obnoxiousness and fallaciousness⁷ once the hypothesis of the *genius malignus* is discarded. This means that man is not able to attribute qualities to God in the same sense as he does to himself.⁸ Man's properties are more like the marks which the artist has left on his work (Med 51). The fissure between man and God is so deep that real human understanding of him is precluded (To Mersenne, April 15, 1630, AT I 146).

There is one property, however, in which, according to Descartes, man is really comparable to God. Like his creator, man is endowed with an infinite will. For this reason it can be maintained that God has created man in his own image.⁹ Here the danger of confusion between the human sphere and the divine one crops up. Despite his limitations man has an infinite will which may spur him on to the hubris of trying to be God-like: "Nous pouvons venir à l'extravagance de souhaiter d'être dieux" (to Chanut, Feb 1, 1647, AT IV 608). But here again, rational separation is able to avoid confusion. The finite can be divided from the infinite. Man accomplishes this by making a rational separation within his will, and reducing it to striving for what is clear and distinct. If man controls his own will in this manner, he will inevitably stay within his limits and avoid hubris, because God is the author of clear and distinct truth, which precludes the dangers of error.¹⁰ In Descartes' cosmology the divine is thus rationally separated, both from the natural sphere and from that of man. Where confusion threatens, further rational separation is the solution. That God is known rationally implies that he is reached in man's private reflection and not in public worship—another exemplification of his transcendence.

Despite his furious rejection of the charge, to some extent it is understandable that in his time Descartes was accused of atheism. His God only exists at the boundaries of nature and of man's life. Despite

⁷ Med 52: "[...]habens omnes illas perfectiones, quas non ego comprehendere, sed quocunque modo attingere cogitatione possum, et nullis plane defectibus obnoxius. Ex quibus satis patet illum fallacem esse non posse."

⁸ "Sed praeterea in Deo intelligimus absolutem immensitatem, simplicitatem, unitatem omnia alia attributa complectentem, quae nullum plane exemplum habet, [...] ratione cujus agnoscimus nihil eorum quae particulatim, ut in nobis ea percipimus, ita etiam in Deo propter defectum intellectus nostri consideramus, univoce illi et nobis convenire" (AT VII 137).

⁹ "Dieu nous a donné une volonté qui n'a point de bornes. Et c'est principalement à cause de cette volonté infinie qui est en nous qu'on peut dire qu'il nous a créé à son image" (to Mersenne, Dec 25, 1639, AT II 628).

¹⁰ Med. 61-62 "quoties voluntatem in iudiciis ferendis ita contineo, ut ad ea tantum se extendat quae illi clare et distincte ab intellectu exhibentur, fieri plane non potest ut errem, quia omnis clara et distincta perceptio proculdubio est aliquid, ac proinde a nihilo esse non potest, sed necessario Deum autorem habet."

Descartes' religious intentions, God's transcendence ensures that his disappearance is but a small step. It should come as no surprise that in subsequent centuries Europe has shown a strong tendency to minimize divine power and to maximize that of man. The final stage in the process of driving out God and instating man in his place was reached in Sartre's comment that in referring to the divine will Descartes in reality had given a description of his own infinite freedom (LC 307-08).

Man's rational separation of nature and the divine returns in Descartes' conception of fundamental social relations. The methodic device of rationally separating clear ideas from unclear ones requires a thorough individualism. In order to be rational, one has to be independent, conscious of one's existence. While remaining dependent upon others, for example parents and teachers, one tends to follow ingrained habits and so to err (DM 13). In order to make such rational separations another separation is necessary: that of the individual from others. The rational man withdraws into himself. He cannot depend upon others. It is not even absolutely certain that they exist (Med 43). Their existence has to be proved from the true fountainhead of certainty, one's own existence. This proof can only be given by ratiocination, not by sense perception. What the senses perceive as human beings might be hats and coats covering automatons (Med 32). Rational knowledge thus implies isolation: nobody can do my understanding for me (Sartre LC 292).

There is an interesting analogy between the rationally reduced entities of nature which can subsequently be unified, and the rationally isolated subjects: together, the latter form an ideal unity as well. After his salutary isolation, every rational subject (that is, every human being) will come to identical conclusions. Because all human beings share man's essence, rationality, abstractive reduction of the ego results in perfect intersubjectivity: "*la puissance de bien juger et de distinguer le vrai d'avec le faux[...]est naturellement égale en tous les hommes*" (DM 2).

This idea has found extensive application in European cosmology. Stripped of accidental variation, every person is regarded as a unique, free subject, qualified to make his own reasonable decisions. At the same time all unique subjects taken together form a community of equals. There are no ingrained structural differentiations. This is where we encounter the two pillars of European cosmology: liberty and equality. The individual is an independent monad, conscious of its existence, while the community is a unity of monads—their pre-established harmony is presupposed (Dumont HH 17). Hence there is a deep analogy between Descartes' methodic isolation of clear and distinct ideas, his isolation of the rational individual, and the premises of democracy. As Sartre puts it, referring to Descartes:

One human being cannot be more human than another, because freedom is equally infinite in everyone. In this sense, nobody has shown better than Descartes the link between the spirit of science and the spirit of democracy, for no one can base universal suffrage on anything else than the universally disseminated faculty to say no or to say yes.(LC 293)

Unlike non-Cartesian cultures, European society is not based on collectivities structurally differentiated on an *a priori* basis. It is a society of individuals equal in essence if not in success. Here the contours of reductive cosmology become visible. The separation of God, man and nature returns in the isolation of man from others. This individualistic paradigm may have religious consequences: religion will be internalized, non-ritualistic (cf. Douglas NS 32). Because man is isolated from nature, God and his fellow-men, he is essentially invulnerable: his inner being is not really affected by adversity or paradoxical circumstances, a conclusion drawn by Sartre¹¹ and, as we shall see, by Descartes as well.

Descartes' rational isolation of man's essence also enabled him to solve the problem of death. It is a confusing thought that man is a living being, but that he is mortal as well: life and death seem to be intermingled in human existence. According to Descartes this confusion need not occur when a distinction is made between man's life and his mortality, parallel to that between man as a thinking substance and as an extended one. Man is only mortal insofar as he is a part of nature. But this part can be eliminated by reduction in the description of man's true essence, rationality. This implies that mortality in fact belongs to the inessential aspect of man. If the thinking substance is fundamentally distinct from the natural substance during life, it is quite plausible that what is living in man should persist on its own after death. There is no reason why it should die together with the body. This rational separation of the mortal body from the really important immortal soul mitigates all fear of death:

[One] thing we must know is the nature of our soul, as it exists within the body, being much nobler than the body and capable of enjoying an infinity of delights which cannot be found in this life; for this prevents us from fearing death and cuts our ties with worldly things to such an extent that we disregard all that is in the power of fortune.(AT IV 292)

Because death consists of the separation of the immortal soul from the body, after death the body does not change in any fundamental way.¹²

¹¹ "Bien sûr, il y a liberté contre *soi*. Et le *soi* est *nature* au regard de la liberté qui le veut changer. Mais pour qu'il puisse être "*soi*" il faut d'abord qu'il soit liberté. La nature n'est, autrement, qu'extériorité, donc négation radicale de la personne. Même le *désarroi*, c'est-à-dire l'imitation intérieure de l'extériorité, même l'*aliénation* supposent la liberté (Sartre LC 308 note 1).

¹² AT VII 153 "corpus autem humanum, quatenus a reliquis corporibus differt, ex sola membrorum configuratione aliisque ejusmodi accidentibus constare; ac denique mortem corporis a sola aliqua divisione aut figurae mutatione pendere."

Though many Europeans go one step further than Descartes and separate life completely from the possibility of a personal after-life, they follow his advice not to fear death during life but to separate both areas as far as possible. We shall see that in interconnected cosmologies the meaning of death is different. Being non-individualistic these cultures care less about personal survival after death than about the continuity of the family line from ancestors to future generations, as de Tocqueville has remarked.¹³

Descartes' methodology has tremendous implications for the conception of the order of nature as well as of human interactions. First of all the order of nature is drastically separated from human rules of right and wrong. The organization of nature has no moral significance. Descartes is firmly opposed to the practices of alchemists and magicians, and he is horrified by astrologers whose predictions are made to come true, like self-fulfilling prophecies, by their naive believers (to Mersenne, Jan 29, 1640, AT III 15). This separation of the natural and the moral order implies the renouncing of a *Gesamtordnung* to which man and other living beings belong (Löwith GMW 82). Nature loses its moral significance, and human interactions are regulated by laws which have no basis in nature.

There is one area, however, in which Descartes' rational man is connected with the order of the cosmos as a whole. To Descartes the *rerum natura* is the creation as willed by God. This implies that it is essentially good and should be accepted by anyone who is rational. In a Stoic (and sometimes Christian) vein, Descartes admonishes us to accept, even to love the natural order.¹⁴ This is consistent with his conception of man as an individual who is principally separated from his surroundings and therefore cannot be essentially influenced by them.

The whole of the Cartesian cosmology rests on the rational conception of human insight. The method of separative reduction leads to knowledge without vagueness, confusion, metaphors, ambiguity or paradox. This implies that the reduced cosmos itself is without distur-

¹³ DA II.105-06: "Chez les peuples aristocratiques, les familles restent pendant des siècles dans le même état, et souvent dans le même lieu. Cela rend, pour ainsi dire, tout les générations contemporaines. Un homme connaît presque toujours ses aïeux et les respecte... non seulement la démocratie fait oublier à chaque homme ses aïeux, mais elle lui cache ses descendants et le sépare de ses contemporains; elle le ramène sans cesse vers lui seul."

¹⁴ "Par *rerum naturam* [Sénèque] entend l'ordre établie par Dieu en toutes les choses qui sont au monde, et que, considérant cet ordre comme infaillible et indépendant de notre volonté, il dit[...] que c'est sagesse d'acquiescer à l'ordre des choses et de faire ce pourquoi nous croyons être nés; ou bien, pour parler en Chrétien, que c'est sagesse de se soumettre à la volonté de Dieu et de la suivre en toutes nos actions" (to Elisabeth, Aug. 18, 1645, AT IV 273).

bance or internal hostility. Nature, God and man being carefully distinguished, potential conflicts between them are precluded. There is no need to fear death, which is separable from life by the employment of rational power. This also enables man to master the world, and where that is impossible, to master himself. Finally, the social life of rational beings is the life of a harmonious community of equal, yet unique individuals.

This brings us to an important conclusion from Descartes' method of rational separation: eventually it enables man to reach a *vita beata* by the rational separation between what is in man's power and what is not. As soon as this distinction is unshakeable, happiness is within reach. What man can do should be done (or omitted) on rational grounds, what man cannot do should be accepted as a part of God's creation which can only be admired.

This same separation is presupposed in Descartes' moral precepts. With respect to what is in his power, man should follow the dictates of reason and separate it from the dark passions (AT IV 265). Then it is certain that the subsequent action will give no occasion for regret. Even when an action rests on grounds that are not completely rationally ascertained, which is sometimes inevitable due to incomplete knowledge, happiness is attainable. Rational man has to remain resolute in his chosen action which is the best one possible in view of the knowledge he can possess. Then there can be no reason for regret afterwards (AT II 34).

Regarding what is not in his power, man has to separate his desires, and eliminate those striving for the impossible. Because man has the ability to accept circumstances which he rationally knows to be unchangeable (they are part of God's creation), he has the ability to become happy:

My third maxim was to try always to conquer myself rather than fortune, and to alter my desires rather than change the order of the world[...] And this alone seemed to me sufficient to prevent my desiring anything in the future beyond what I could actually obtain, hence rendering me content. (DM 96-97) (Fr. DM 25)

The result of Cartesian cosmology is that logical harmony, manifesting itself in the absence of confusion and contradiction, has a cosmological significance as well. Descartes lived in a unified world essentially devoid of tension and paradox, even in the light of notorious problems like that of man's tendency to abuse his freedom and that of human unhappiness. With respect to the first problem Descartes acknowledges in the *Meditations* that if he only considers himself, God could have made him more perfect, in that man has a tendency to abuse his freedom and then to err. But the ensuing contradiction between the essential perfection of God and his creation on the one hand, and human imperfection on the other,

is only imaginary. Human imperfection should be seen as a part of the whole of creation which is the more perfect in that it not only contains perfection, but the difference between erring and perfection as well (Med 61).

To the second problem, that of unhappiness (for example due to illness, poverty, or disfigurement), Descartes has found an equally harmonious solution. Because he believes happiness is not dependent upon external possessions, he is convinced that those who are poorest and most disgraced by fortune are nevertheless able to be "completely content and satisfied" (To Elisabeth, Aug. 4, 1645, AT IV 264-65). Therefore such phenomena cannot threaten the harmony of the universe. This harmony is inevitable when man acquiesces in the order of things, or, speaking from a Christian point of view, submits to the will of God (to Elisabeth, Aug. 18, 1645, AT IV 273).

Although separative cosmology is the predominant scheme of differentiation in European culture, it is by no means its exclusive pattern. European culture is not a monolith: although their indications are often sparse and overshadowed by Cartesian ideology, in European art, religion, politics, even philosophy, reminiscences of non-Cartesian cosmologies may be unearthed. Nor is there one single interconnected cosmology: of course such cosmologies differ widely among themselves, and we shall only discuss such aspects of cultures as can be opposed to Cartesian points of view.¹⁵

Cosmologies change perpetually in movements of generation and destruction, but interconnected cosmologies are not primitive phenomena which are discarded by rational evolution: they flourish in modern societies like Japan. On the other hand, Cartesian cosmology is not a unique European phenomenon, depending upon scientific evolution or upon urban development. Quite a few non-European societies, for example in Melanesia and in New Guinea, share certain fundamental tenets of Cartesian cosmology. In these societies low social interdependence prevails, together with highly competitive individualism (Douglas NS 164). There is no predominant philosophy of hierarchy in these societies, but rather an ethic of equality, which is, of course, contradicted by real disparity of status (Douglas CB 3). In these societies, nature is largely devoid of religious aspects: it is a whole of manipulable objects, governed by impersonal, rational rules (NS 165). In such

¹⁵ We do not believe that all the cultures we shall discuss share all aspects of the 'ideal' non-Cartesian cosmology, nor do we advocate one cosmology or another. Such advocacy would be ridiculous: one does not choose one's cosmology, one is born into it. We are writing in and from the Cartesian cosmology and are unable to transcend it.

societies, religious ritual may be virtually non-existent, and where it does occur, it may be devoid of interconnectedness.¹⁶

Among the Garia of New Guinea, for example, the cosmos was conceived of as a unified physical realm with hardly any supernatural attributes. This affected their views on religion, ethics and death:

Spiritual values such as purity and sin were non-existent. There was no idea of rewards in the next world in return for good works or of separate destinations for "good" and "bad." The affairs of the dead automatically regulated themselves. (Douglas NS 154)

It is interesting to add that the whole cosmology of the Garia was based on the distinction between those who 'really knew' and thereby were successful, and those who did not use this ability (NS 155). We may therefore conclude that separative cosmology is by no means the unique result of a European development, but a recurring type of cosmology.

Nobody will deny that separative cosmology has proved extremely effective in controlling both logical and existential conflicts. But at what price has this unified and harmonious universe been bought? Separation means instituting order, but doesn't it mean expelling, rejecting, repressing disorder as well? It is only reasonable to suppose that the process of separation leaves waste products. On the one hand, separation presupposes a previously unseparated reality. This mixed reality was once a necessary condition for the emergence of order. Therefore it can only be destroyed by driving disorder out. On the other hand, disorder is expelled, but never totally abolished: even though secondary, it remains a threat to order. Descartes' rational man, for example, has to consider sense perception and emotion as secondary and accidental, yet he is obsessed by the fear that these confusions will intrude upon the clear corpus of rationality.

The same is true of the confusions of evil and unhappiness in human life. Through Descartes's moral precepts these confusions are separated from man's essence, rationality, yet non-essentials keep haunting human life, which has to exert incessant vigilance against them. Perhaps success in expelling confusion and contradiction is akin to repression: what has been expelled is denied, but continually feared as well. In the following section we shall briefly outline two strategies to cope with these problems.

¹⁶ An example of a tribe of Persian nomads: 'The Basseri show a poverty of ritual activities which is quite striking[...]What is more, the different elements of ritual do not seem closely connected or interrelated in a wider system of meanings' (F. Barth, in Douglas NS 37-38).

2.3. Harmonization in separative cosmology

Present-day Europeans live in a cosmology moulded irretrievably by the ontology of separation. We are not able to consider nature or natural events as objects of worship; we cannot believe that our moral transgressions might anger gods who will punish us by natural disasters which may pollute our family through many generations, etc.

The idea that we live in a cosmos with clearly separated categories is one aspect of the statement that we do not live by 'mythical' but by 'rational' thought. A closely related aspect is the fact that we do not only live in a world in which cosmological categories like nature and the divine are dissociated, but also in a world in which the demand for clear and distinct knowledge precludes the acceptance of genuine contradictions between and within categories (*coincidentiae oppositorum*). The principles of identity and non-contradiction are the basis of true knowledge and are by implication applied to the cosmos as a whole. Reality cannot be confused or paradoxical.

The connection between separative thinking and the principle of non-contradiction has been convincingly demonstrated by Vernant in his description of the rise of 'rational' thought in Greece, with the concomitant separation of the political individual from family ties, and the rise of the idea of *isonomia*, equality before the law (MGP II 114ff.). Vernant points out that the rise of philosophy was the result of two major cosmological transformations: separative thought was opposed to the mythical identification of nature and the divine, and the principle of identity was opposed to the ancient idea of a union of opposites (MPG II 106, cf. Detienne MV 79, 124, 132). This close connection between the rejection of interconnectedness and the emergence of the principles of identity and of non-contradiction has determined the major current of European thought. Descartes' cosmology may be considered its culmination.

It is of the utmost importance, however, to emphasize that Cartesian separative thinking has been fundamentally undermined in the Western philosophy of the following centuries. Since the rise of the philosophy of Hegel, it has become impossible for philosophers not to admit the reality of negativity and disorder in the realm of thought—a challenge to the principles of identity and non-contradiction. It is no accident that Hegel's philosophy of the acknowledgement of negativity has introduced classical tragedy, and primarily the *Antigone*, into the heart of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. The importance of this event may be gathered from the fact that Greek tragedy played no role at all in the philosophies of Descartes and Kant, whereas since Hegel it has become impossible for philosophers to omit the incorporation of tragedy into their thought, as

is proved by the philosophies of Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricœur and Derrida. Yet, although they accept tragic disorder and negativity, in the final instance these philosophies are not expressions of interconnected culture, as Greek tragedies are, but remain essentially separative. The separations performed by these philosophers are not immediate, however, as in Cartesian philosophy, but indirect. They are effected by strategies of harmonization through which the principle of non-contradiction is preserved.

Philosophers who incorporate tragedy into their thinking nevertheless separate it from its sting of division and ambiguity by their very efforts to interiorize and accept it. They do not exorcize tragedy in a direct way, but indirectly, by assimilation; in modern philosophies, tragedy is either appropriated or accepted. But the question is whether such philosophical appropriation is not at the same time the expropriation of the tragic, whether the acceptance of tragedy does not conceal its tacit repression (cf. Derrida Gl 188). We have already encountered one example of separation by assimilation in the philosophy of Descartes, where he speaks of evil and unhappiness. Descartes is forced to admit that these forms of negativity cannot be removed by direct rational separation: even rational people may become unhappy. He then escapes from the necessity of admitting real division by using a harmonizing strategy: in a Stoic as well as Christian vein he accepts these forms of negativity. In such strategies of acceptance a secondary separation is hidden: by accepting it, division is deprived of its tragic nature. Its positive aspects are emphasized, its negative aspects are absorbed.

Both strategies of harmonization, that of interiorization and that of acceptance, akin in more than one respect, are developed in an exemplary way in the philosophy of Ricœur. Time and again, Ricœur has opposed the Cartesian equation *cogito sum* and the concomitant idea of rational man's position of harmony with the cosmos and himself. What modern thought has taught us through the masters of distrust, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, is to face the non-identity of man's thinking about himself and his alienated existence. Modern man is confronted with humanity's position of alienation from the whole of the cosmos:

The initial situation from which reflection sets out, is "oblivion:" I am lost, "gone astray" among things and separated from the centre of my existence, just as I am separated from the others and am the enemy of all. (Ricœur DI 53)

This alienation is detectable in a great many fields. The mere fact that man is a temporal being means that his identity is permeated with dispersion: change makes that time and again I am another than myself (VI

425). Looking at the paradoxical unity of freedom and necessity in man's life, we are forced to speak of a lesion of being (VI 417). And suffering is not merely a feeling, it is a way of discovering man's diversity and negativity, especially where life and death are concerned:

I am diverse, I am legion: and here my future as dust announces itself. Undoubtedly only a composed being is capable of lesions. This negativity is revealed to me by suffering. (Ricœur FN 450) (Fr. VI 423)

The most terrible contradiction in human life is the actual existence of evil, despite man's fundamentally innocent nature (SM 155, 157). This implies that the unity of man with himself and his world cannot be comprehended within the limits of Cartesianism (VI 439). But insistence on negativity has not dashed Ricœur's hope of a final cosmological harmony. His philosophical faith is the will to reinstate the unity of being which has been assassinated by negation: "We only reflect on negation in the ardent hope of surmounting it" (VI 419).

The first strategy of harmonization that Ricœur develops is the idea that cultural and existential alienation may also be productive, viz. when it is employed in interpretation. By efforts of interpretation, especially deep, distrusting interpretation, at first man alienates himself even further from himself, but this estrangement is productive if it leads to a better understanding, both of oneself and of one's world (IT 44). This shows that Ricœur interprets understanding as appropriation, which is a complement to the dispossession of oneself (IT 94). In his eyes, appropriation should not be understood as taking possession, as the incorporation of strangeness by a sovereign ego (HHS 191). On the contrary, it can only exist as a complement to a prior alienation: I can only internalize the subject matter of an *interpretandum* if I disappropriate myself from myself (PH 50). Appropriation is the process by which the revelation of strangeness gives the subject new powers of knowing himself, and thus of enlarging both himself and his world. The dialectical process of appropriation results in a higher harmony of man and his cosmos, forming a broadening of the appropriating subject (HHS 182, 195) and bridging distance and alienation: "I must recover something which previously has been lost. I 'appropriate' what has ceased to be mine, what was 'proper' to me. I make 'mine' what I have been separated from" (DI 52).

This first strategy of Ricœur's is closely akin to Hegelian dialectics. Via the immense detour of alienation and negativity, his *telos* is a Hegelian conception of the stages of the spirit (CI 241, cf. DI 458). How a Hegelian dialectic is able to preserve harmony, and thereby the idea of non-contradiction, in a separative cosmology which has to acknowledge contradictions in reality, can be demonstrated from the

nature of negative experience. Everybody is acquainted with experiences felt to be threatening or incomprehensible because they do not fit into one's conceptual framework. Yet this recognition need not lead to admitting contradictions in reality, if man can learn from negative experience. Negativity can then be incorporated in a process of ever growing self-knowledge, which is also an ever growing identification of man with his cosmos. This dialectical process is set in motion when an experience loses its threatening negativity through being conceptualized and incorporated into man's self-knowledge. Then the enlarged conceptual framework, which is also an enlarged self, is able to confront fresh experiences which are incorporated in their turn. Learning through experience then is a process of self-aggrandizement, and a process of harmonization of man and cosmos (Hegel PG 73, Gadamer WM 336). In Hegel's point of view, this process of appropriation of negativity ends in a state in which the mind has nothing to fear from experience, because all negativity has been incorporated in total self-knowledge, which is a complete harmony of man and cosmos (PG 75).

In modern times, the concept of a dialectical unity attainable by appropriation has been severely criticized, because the idea that this process can terminate fails to acknowledge the ineluctable finiteness of human knowledge. This has led thinkers like Gadamer and Ricœur to a second strategy of harmonization, the complement of the first: the strategy of acceptance or consent. Besides the dialectical experience Gadamer acknowledges another experience: that of finiteness. Through learning by such suffering, man is able to accept that he is not divine and is therefore unable to reach absolute knowledge. Here the idea of learning through negative experience has a radically altered sense: it is not the incorporation of negativity into an ever expanding conscious ego, but the recognition of finite reality, which may serve as a warning against the dogmatic *Wunschbesessenheit* of man's character:

Experience therefore is experience of human finiteness. He who realizes this, who knows that he is not master of time and future, is experienced in the proper sense. For the experienced person knows the limits of all foresight and the uncertainty of all plans. (WM 339)

A similar attitude is taken by Ricœur, who recognizes that the final goal of absolute knowledge is unattainable: "philosophy mourns the loss of absolute knowledge" (HHS 193). He turns to the second strategy of harmonization as well: the acceptance of negativity and finiteness, which he considers an aspect of appropriation (VI 450). Part of one's self-realization through self-knowledge consists in being confronted with naked reality, with *Ananke* (DI 43). Such a confrontation is a humiliation

for human narcissism (DI 274), resulting in the art of enduring the burden of existence (DI 321), for example the inevitability of death (DI 323).

To Ricœur this is more than the acceptance of the inevitable; his is a philosophy of loving consent in the negativity of reality:

Apart from this adhesion, this consent to my own rigidity, there is, for pure understanding, no *harmonious* resolution, no *system* of nature and freedom, but always a paradoxical, precarious synthesis. (FN 373) (Fr. VI 350)

Even this *amor fati* is not the final stage in Ricœur's strategy of harmonization, because man's power of endurance is finite as well. Therefore full consent is never achieved: it is impossible to be completely satisfied with one's character, the unconscious and life. It is equally impossible to turn the sadness of finiteness and contingency into joy. The worst negativity consists in the persistence of evil, which makes complete consent impossible (VI 451). Nevertheless, for Ricœur there is a way of preserving the harmony of man and cosmos: living in an eschatological hope of a new harmony in which negativity, especially that of evil, is shown to be part of a new reconciliation which cannot be reasonably expected, but only hoped for:

Paraphrasing Saint Paul, I dare to say: wherever evil "abounds," there hope "superabounds". We must therefore have the courage to incorporate evil into the epic of hope. In a way that we know not, evil itself cooperates, works toward, the advancement of the Kingdom of God[...] Faith justifies the man of the *Aufklärung*, for whom, in the great romance of culture, evil is a factor in the education of the human race. (CI 439) (Fr. CI 429-30)

It remains doubtful if harmonizing strategies, whether appropriative or accepting, do not tacitly remove the tragic essence of division and ambiguity in order to be able to incorporate tragedy into a philosophy which continues to reject real contradictions: appropriation may well rest on a tacit expropriation, acceptance on a silent rejection. We are convinced that the *Antigone*, being part of an interconnected culture, can never be incorporated into any philosophical system without losing its tragic character. Philosophy which accounts for this tragedy cannot remain philosophy in any ordinary sense. Only by undermining the separative and harmonizing interpretations of this tragedy can its tragic nature be revealed, and its interconnected nature be confronted with philosophy.

CHAPTER THREE

INTERCONNECTED COSMOLOGIES

3.1. Building materials of interconnected cosmologies

Whenever cultures make cosmological differentiations they carefully delimit their categories, marking them off by boundaries. These do not only comprise visible demarcations like thresholds or walls, but may also be expressed in a great variety of other codes. The religious boundary between the sacred and the profane, for example, may be given shape in the code of space (accessibility of holy and sacred places), of sounds, of food and sexuality (e.g. restrictions for priests), of clothing, etc.

What distinguishes interconnected cultures from separative ones is not a lack of separation. In interconnected cultures, differentiation is just as important as in separative ones, but it is not a procedure of reduction and re-assembly; in interconnected cosmologies, differentiation does not lead to clear and distinct entities and categories. Their demarcations are not clear but cumulative: there are many interconnected modes of expressing the meaning of a cosmological difference, and these modes form a dense pattern of variable, contrasting, rich meanings. The distinction between the religious and the profane, for example, is expressed in codes which are transformations of each other, and which are all necessary to express its meaning. It is not possible to confine oneself to the spatial distinction between holy places and profane places—this spatial distinction is transformed into the distinction between, for example, the silence in profane nature and the noise which is made on holy ground. It is also transformed into interdictions applying to access to holy places, etc.

Moreover, in interconnected cosmologies differentiations are not distinct, but dispersed. By the process of transformation, a categorial difference can be transposed from one category to another. For example, the violation of social relations which occurs in incest (a confusion of the boundaries of family and marriage) may be considered an intrusion of untamed nature into culture. This implies that incest may have consequences not only for the fertility of women, but also for the fertility of the land. And by a further transformation, the gods may be involved too. The ailments or famine thought to be the consequences of incest are also considered divine punishments, and therefore regarded as the execution of divine justice. If blindness or madness are thought of as connected with incest, such punishments may also be viewed as affecting the power of insight.

In the dilemma that we have pointed out before, viz. that in a cosmology people either have to reduce multiplicity for the sake of univocity (the separative solution), or give up univocity for the sake of multiplicity, interconnected cosmologies choose the latter direction. Diversity is not reduced, but woven into a texture of implicit connections, at the expense of clearness and distinctness. No unambiguous unity is attained, but a pictorial whole of interconnected nodes. This does not imply that interconnected cosmologies are confused, as anthropologists like Frazer supposed: all the usual categorial distinctions are made, such as nature/culture, living/dead, man/animals. The difference with separative cosmologies is that the categories distinguished remain interlinked by networks of metaphorical and metonymical lines.¹

For our argument regarding the *Antigone* it is important to realize that boundaries may be considered from two distinct points of view. On the one hand, they can be conceived of as absolute. In that case the boundary delimits the area concerned, and whoever or whatever ventures outside the boundary transgresses it. On the other hand, boundaries may be regarded as relative, i.e. as dividing two areas which might become confused or brought into conflict, but which should both be taken into consideration. In this case a transgression does not consist of the overstepping of an absolute line, but of a one-sided preference for one area over another. For example, in most patrilocal cultures a woman has to pay respect both to her own and to her husband's family. If she neglects one in favour of the other, she upsets the balance which should be maintained between the two. This may easily lead to confusion and conflict.

Every cosmology is inevitably confronted with marginality, i.e. with whatever cannot be definitely assigned to one category or another, or falls outside existing categories. Marginality is the inevitable complement of the human yearning for clear distinctions. Because reality always transcends man's concepts of it, mankind continually faces negative experiences, as we have seen in the chapter on separative cosmology. That marginality is part of any cosmology has been convincingly argued by Douglas:

[...]the yearning for rigidity is in us all. It is part of our human condition to long for hard lines and clear concepts. When we have them we have to

¹ "Les 'primitifs' comme on sait, ne classent pas comme nous les êtres de la nature en règnes nettement séparés, et n'attachent pas la même importance à la distinction entre les êtres vivants et les autres. Ils croient, sans y avoir réfléchi, à l'homogénéité essentielle des êtres et des objets, même inanimés, qui les entourent. Non pas que les différences fondamentales qui font l'armature de nos classifications leur aient échappé. En général, ils ne les ignorent pas" (Lévy-Bruhl SN 79).

either face the fact that some realities elude them, or else blind ourselves to the inadequacy of the concepts. The final paradox of the search for purity is that it is an attempt to force experience into logical categories of non-contradiction. But experience is not amenable and those who make the attempt find themselves led into contradiction. (PD 162)

In the second chapter we have seen that in our separative European cosmology marginality which is not acceptable to the prevalent manner of thinking is approached by procedures of separation (for example the separation of the world of floating experience from that of clear essences) and of harmonization (appropriation and acceptance). Such procedures are to be found in interconnected cultures as well—but their nature is different. In such cultures separation need not lead to a reduction of marginality, but accounts for marginality in the cosmology itself. Just as boundaries may be absolute or relative, marginality is also absolute or relative. Marginal entities may be indefinite with respect to the boundaries of a particular category, but they may also occupy a shadowy position between categories, or constitute an intermingling of them (for example, the snake, which fell outside all categories for the biblical Israelites, or the whale which was between a mammal and a fish for 17th-century Europeans). People may be marginals as well: social systems have absolute marginals—the outsiders, like shamans, prophets or drug addicts—as well as relative in-betweens, those who are simultaneously members of two groups with incompatible cosmologies (contemporary examples: migrant foreigners or persons of mixed ethnic origin). It should be emphasized that marginality concerns both the lower and the higher social strata, e.g. both beggars and kings.

The concept of marginality should not be applied indiscriminately, since that might lead to considering everybody marginal who is not a forty-year-old, healthy, working, indigenous male possessing civil rights, a wife and children (Versnel GM 221). We should realize that margins exist only in relation to a certain boundary or set of boundaries in a specific culture. In some cultures women are in a marginal position during menstruation, in others they are not. In some contexts this marginality is relevant (e.g. in cooking), in others it is not (e.g. in child rearing).

Cosmologies do not accept all marginality. In every society there is a tendency to preserve the existing boundaries and to condemn marginalities as anomalies which defy its assumptions (Douglas PD 39). If marginality is not accepted, it constitutes a transgression, which may consist of the infringement of a boundary or take the form of a conflict between categories. Societies with a closely interconnected cosmology will generally punish transgressions more openly than will those with

separative cosmologies. In such cosmologies, transgressions may threaten the whole of the cosmos by transformation (Douglas NS 87). Fundamental infringements of boundaries like patricide, incest, blasphemy or desecration of the dead are feared because they endanger all differentiation: they destroy difference (Girard VS 111).²

In interconnected cosmologies there is no absolute distinction between 'physical' and 'moral' transgressions. In Europe only vestiges exist of connections between illness and moral turpitude, or between disasters like plagues and human misbehaviour. In interconnected cultures this is different: among the Dinka, for example, the same word denotes incest and its automatic consequence, a skin disease (Lienhardt DE 128). In an interconnected cosmology, transgression is not confined to moral or physical shortcomings; it may refer to excesses as well. The superabundant growth of a plant for instance may be regarded as a boundary transgression.

Some gross infringements of boundaries and some conflicts are condemned as pollutions. Pollution is not primarily material, something that stinks, looks disgusting or is unhygienic. As Douglas says, pollutions are the by-products of cosmological differentiation. They embody what has to be rejected in order to preserve the prevalent order of categories (IM 51). Pollutions play a greater part in interconnected cultures than in separative ones, because in the former the abhorrence of the contagiousness of abnormality is greater (Douglas CB 23). Pollution is not unknown to European culture; its terminology is used to characterize those who belong to that culture, but do not share its fundamental tenets, the principles of equality and liberty.³ But in European culture, pollution

² This cosmological fear can be illustrated by the famous example of the Eskimo girl from Labrador who persistently ate caribou meat after winter had begun, and who was punished by banishment in midwinter:

These Eskimo have constructed a society whose fundamental category is the distinction of the two seasons. People born in winter are distinguished from those born in summer. Each of the two seasons has a special kind of domestic arrangement, a special seasonal economy, a separate legal practice, almost a distinct religion[...]By disregarding these distinctive categories the girl was committing a wrong against the social system in its fundamental form. (Douglas IM 244)

³ The language of pollution is conspicuous in the condemnation of those who contest the principles of equality and liberty, particularly fascists, national socialists and South Africans. The phenomenon of contagion, which is characteristic of pollution, is also visible here: the pollution extends to the paraphernalia of national socialism such as books and swastikas, and to those South Africans who do not agree with their government—their dissent does not prevent them from being excluded from international sports events, etc. But it is characteristic of European culture that pollution does not spread across cosmological categories: interconnectedness of categories through pollution is almost non-existent. For example, it is not believed that the South African soil has been contaminated by its inhabitants, that people become ill because of its produce, or that the religious sphere is thrown into dangerous disorder by apartheid.

does not spread from one category to another. In interconnected cultures, however, it may spread across all categories of the cosmology: the whole cosmos may lose its balance due to even minor pollutions, which accounts for the fear of pollution.

What constitutes pollution? First of all, pollution is more than merely dirt; it has a cosmological significance. Meigs is right when she argues against Douglas that pollution should be distinguished from mess (PP 310)—but it should be distinguished from plain dirt as well. Pollution is specifically abhorred because it means exposure to a force which could undermine the whole of the cosmos (Lévy-Bruhl SN 281). Pollution means contact with indeterminate power; therefore a messy room or a dirty shirt do not constitute pollution, but incest does.

It is true that pollution may consist of the intrusion of nature into culture, for example in the case of body emissions (Meigs PP 312) or in birth and death (Parker M 63), but that does not imply that pollution can be reduced to the penetration of nature into civilization. In the first place, pollution is connected with all cosmological categories: it comprises religious offences, violations of social relations such as incest, the transgression of ethical taboos, the confusion of life and death (murder of kin, maltreatment of corpses), and abuse of knowledge (e.g. false oaths and prophecies). In the second place, whether something is a pollution or not can only be determined in relation to the whole of a cosmology. This can be illustrated by the example of the Cheyenne Indians, who depended upon bison for their foraging. They were afraid the herds might be frightened off by a putrid smell exuding from human beings under specific circumstances; this odour was emitted only by those who had killed their brother, not by other murderers. The transgression of a social aspect of their cosmology determined whether the relation between man and nature had been contaminated or not (Douglas IM 239).

Like other transgressions, pollution is whatever transcends the system, whether by shortage or excess. In the Papuan Hua culture, for example, not only blood, corpses and pigs are polluted, but the largest and best of the garden produce as well (Meigs PP 308-09). Pollution is also essentially a contagious phenomenon: what is polluted is polluting as well. It is partly by the contagiousness of contamination that the interconnections between categories are maintained. Contagion can take place by contiguity: the danger of coming into contact with something polluted (Lévy-Bruhl SN 281). A Bantu example in which nature/culture, social relations and life/death are interconnected: “When the patriarch or even simply his wife dies, the village is abandoned and reconstructed elsewhere[...]. His death brings back primordial chaos; the people are said to be ‘*Buhlapfa*’—‘in the bush’” (Roumeguère PSA 80).

Pollution may also spread by likeness. When incest has been committed, the likeness of the fertility of the earth to that of woman makes the land barren (SN 245-48). Likewise the pollution of a member of a family may spread to other members, whether they are present or not (SN 292). And pollution is a transgression which is independent of the polluter's intentions. A person may be polluted and yet be quite unaware of the fact (Lévy-Bruhl SN 235-38). In interconnected societies people are well acquainted with normal moral faults, and intentionality is taken into account. Crimes which threaten the whole of the cosmos, however, are punished irrespective of intention (cf. Lévy-Bruhl SN 232). Even animals or inanimate objects which have transgressed such borderlines may be punished, corpses may be brought to trial, etc. In ancient Egypt, for example, those who had killed animals like the ibis or the hawk, whether intentionally or not, had to die for their deed (Hdt 2.65, Cic TD 5.78).

By its contagiousness, pollution may quite inadvertently spark over to a completely innocent person who accidentally comes into contact with it. For example, the Japanese mythical brother and sister Izanagi and Izanami are married to each other. The sister dies, and is ashamed of her putrefaction. This affects her brother when he merely looks at her:

She begged him not to look at her in her horrible state, but he could not resist a peek, and seeing her putrifying body swarming with maggots, he exclaimed: "What a hideous and polluted land I have come to unawares" Thus shamed, the furious Izanami sent the ugly Females of the Underworld after him with the express order to kill him. (Buruma JM 1-2) (Dutch SZ 12)

Every culture tries to avoid and remove transgressions and pollutions by procedures of separation. In modern Europe, separation may not only consist of verbal distinctions, but of 'material' purifications as well, although purifications with a symbolic meaning tend to be rationalized technically, e.g. with the aid of medical knowledge. For example, the washing of hands as a ritual to separate mealtimes from other times will be justified on hygienic grounds. And although symbolic purification is accepted in modern Europe, it spreads as little as pollution does. In interconnected cosmologies, separation has symbolic aspects which underline its cumulative and dispersed nature. We shall illustrate this manner of differentiation by five examples.

First of all, interconnected cultures know many kinds of purifications: rites of reversing, untying, burying, washing, erasing, fumigating, etc. (Douglas PD 135). Purification is not primarily a matter of hygiene; it is a ritual action trying to bring about a symbolic separation in a situation of marginality or transgression. When, for example, the Accadian hero Gilgamesh washed his hands and his grimy hair, polished his weapons

and cast off his soiled things (Pritchard ANET 83), this was not because he needed a thorough soaping, but because he wished to separate himself from the pollution caused by his transgression of the boundary between life and death (his slaying of the giant Huwawa). A similar purification takes place before his return from the marginal wilderness to the city (Pritchard ANET 96). Purification thus finds its basis in interconnectedness: it is a symbolic action with long-term effects on various categories.

A specific mode of purification is found in the procedure of expulsion, the physical removal of whatever transgresses from the confines of order into which it has forced itself. In a case of incest, for example, expulsion of the perpetrators may be preferred to execution, because otherwise the dangerous pollution may remain within the bounds of culture and spread over the entire community by contagion (Lévy-Bruhl SN 267-68, 276). Again the interconnected nature of the separation is clear. What happens in transgression—an intrusion of wildness into culture—is repeated inversely in another category: the violator is expelled from civilization into the wilderness, so that the separation by expulsion in one category purifies the pollution of the other categories. If other contaminations then prove purified as well (e.g. illness, failing crops), we may conclude that catharsis is as contagious as pollution. This explains why disasters like plagues can be overcome by finding and expelling a sinner, thus separating the pollution from the whole of the cosmos.

Nevertheless, in many cases expulsion or execution of the polluter is held to be dangerous because of possible retaliation, either by human hands or divine ones. Expulsion or execution could undermine a whole society if the transgressor is a central figure, or if the pollution has spread over large or important segments of the community. In such circumstances, another type of separation is carried out, viz. substitution. This is a well-known phenomenon in Europe: a minister is held responsible for the behaviour of his underlings. In monarchies the minister also substitutes for the king, who in his turn is a representative of the country as a whole. As in other cases of separation in modern Europe, substitution is confined to a single category, in this case the political one. In substitution, the contagious interconnecting power of pollution is employed, but for separative purposes. Just as in pollution, the taint is transferred to something contiguous or similar to the source of contamination, but in substitution the pollution is forced to abandon the original focus of impurity by ritual measures. Once the pollution has thus been separated and transferred to a marginal or unimportant being, the central pillar of society has been purified. In substitution a double separation takes place: first, the transgressor's polluted aspects are

separated from his pure aspects and transferred to the substitute; next, the substitute is removed from the community.

Substitution is not confined to situations of pollution. Many interconnected societies will have one person, e.g. the king, who is the substitute for the whole community, even for the whole cosmos. In prosperous times his behaviour is strictly controlled by ritual, so as not to impair the fertility of the land, the order of the community, etc. In times of adversity he may be chosen as the vicarious victim. But because kings are the axis of the cosmos, a second substitution may be made: a mock king is chosen from the lower strata of society, adorned like a king, and subsequently expelled or executed. Yet even this may be felt to be too threatening. Then a third substitution takes place: an animal is expelled instead of a human being.

In interconnected cultures, in which it is necessary to avoid the detrimental effects of pollution, the model of all substitution, creating a scapegoat, is no mere whim of a distorted mind. By contiguity and similarity a vicarious victim is chosen, to bear the pollution which has been separated from the central person or from the community as a whole, and which will afterwards be expelled from the community (cf. Lev. 16:21).

Another instance of substitution is found in sacrifice. Sacrificial victims may be burdened with the illness and conflicts of the sacrificer or the community, and bear them away in their death. The victim may even be offered as a substitute for the sacrificer, who thus expels his impure aspects, as is pointed out by Lienhardt in a description of Dinka sacrifice:

All kinds of illnesses are often mentioned by name, along with magic roots, and told that they must now be "without an owner," and must "meet together on the back of the ox" "to travel away with it in its death." In sacrifice the Dinka exchange (*war*) the life of the victim for the life of the man for whom the sacrifice is made. The powers take the ox, and the man is spared. (DE 238-39)

To the Cartesian mind, it is almost incomprehensible that pollution and purification could be identical, that purification may take the shape of transgression and pollution. In an interconnected culture, blood that trickles and clots outside the veins is a source of pollution, but in ritual the same blood is a salutary force imparting healing. The meaning of blood is ambiguous. Its status is uncertain, double-edged: it soils *and* purifies (cf. Girard VS 59-60). To Frazer, such ambiguities proved that the primitive mind is confused:

Thus in primitive society the rules of ceremonial purity observed by divine kings, chiefs and priests agree in many respects with the rules observed by homicides, mourners, women in childbed, girls at puberty, hunters and

fishermen, and so on. To us these various classes of persons appear to differ totally in character and condition; some of them we should call holy, others we might pronounce unclean and polluted. But the savage makes no such moral distinction between them; the conceptions of holiness and pollution are not yet differentiated in his mind. To him the common feature of all these persons is that they are dangerous and in danger. (GB 294)

Despite his somewhat derogatory attitude Frazer points out the very nature of ambiguity. Where ambiguity reigns, transgression or pollution cannot be separated from holiness, and this is expressed as being dangerous and in danger at the same time. This points to the essential concept of power, in contrast to order. In a separative cosmology it is essential that the reduced order of nature should be devoid of 'mystical' power which is only imaginary (Descartes AT XI 37). Basically, the forces of nature are laws of nature and can be controlled. But in interconnected cosmologies the source of order is indiscriminate power, undifferentiated, unbounded, which time and again is coerced within the boundaries of cosmology, but always transcends them, which underlies cosmologies and at the same time breaks through their order. Power is an intermingling of the generation of order and its destruction.

One turning point from generation to destruction is hidden in the character of order itself. In order to create cosmological stability, every contact with what transcends order has to be rejected, to be considered dirty—but that means that the power of creation is removed as well. The quest for strict boundaries implies the danger of rigidity and barrenness. When this danger becomes acute, the evaluation of dirt may undergo a metamorphosis. It is realized that dirt is a means of contact with power, and thereby with fertility (Douglas PD 161).

Only cosmologies which do not believe that their cosmological order is all there is will consider marginality, transgression and pollution not only as disturbing order, but also as breaking through human order towards its source. This source of power is not hedged by boundaries, and this means it is highly dangerous: it contains potentialities, but paradoxes and destruction as well. In many interconnected societies this power is recognized, but devices are set in motion to separate the beneficial aspects of power from the obnoxious ones. By means of controlled ambiguity, which is an essential element of ritual, contact is made with power, but power is canalized. We shall give four examples to illustrate controlled ambiguity.

In many interconnected cultures, important breaks in life and the order of the cosmos are marked by rites of passage. Between the rite of segregation from the old situation and that of aggregation to the new one, a marginal period occurs. In that period the subjects of the rite are be-

twixt and between all fixed points of classification (Turner DFM 232). Neophytes, for example, are neither living nor dead from one point of view, and both living and dead from another. The interesting point is that this period of liminality is not only a denial of ordinary structure, but also a contact with its source (Turner FS 96-97). In this situation, transgressors are not condemned, but considered powerful, 'holy.' Their awesome power is ritually canalized, however, and employed for beneficial purposes.⁴

Controlled ambiguity is also seen in the double standard view of incest among the Bai-Ila in Northern Zimbabwe. Normally a committer of incest would be condemned as a transgressor, but such a transgressor was not only in danger: he was dangerous as well, through his contact with power. This explains why under ritual circumstances the incest could be employed for beneficial ends, e.g. to obtain a specific boon (Smith & Dale in Lévy-Bruhl SN 254).

The third example of controlled ambiguity concerns pollution-avoiding eating habits in the Lele culture. Animals considered anomalies from the point of view of the prevailing cosmology are not consumed but rejected as being contaminated. But there is one "hybrid monster," the pangolin, which defies all established categories: it looks like a fish, but lives on the land; it does not shun man like other wild animals, but offers itself patiently to the hunter; it reproduces in a human fashion, giving birth to one young at a time. Yet under strict ritual conditions this dreadful, and therefore powerful monster is not avoided, but religiously worshipped and consumed as a vehicle of divine power (Douglas PD 167, 169).

Scapegoats are excellent examples of ritual ambiguity. They are saddled with all the pollutions of the community, and are therefore extremely dangerous, despite their often humble appearance. That this danger is double-edged shows itself in the ritual of expulsion. By reversal, the initially maleficent power of the scapegoat is turned into an equally strong power of healing. It saves the whole society from disaster (Girard VS 125, BE 66). This means that *ex post facto* the scapegoat can be revered as a holy saviour.

In ritual ambiguity human separation plays a decisive role: the maleficent aspect of power is segregated from the beneficial one. But ritual ambiguity is not the most fundamental ambiguity: that is reached when it is realized that all differentiation, even that of controlled ambiguity, is

⁴ "[...]we find them behaving like dangerous characters. They are licensed to waylay, steal, rape. This behaviour is even enjoined on them. To behave anti-socially is the proper expression of their marginal condition[...]. To have been in the margins is to have been in contact with danger, to have been at a source of power" (Douglas PD 96-97).

fed, but also destroyed, by indiscriminate power. This quintessential ambiguity, which we call tragic ambiguity, is attained when it is realized that order resting on differentiation is not self-sustaining. Cosmological categories derive from indiscriminate power and are upheld by power. But power is essentially two-faced: generation and destruction, pollution and holiness are inseparable in it. Because cosmological ordering is a struggle against the power of ambiguity and paradox on the one hand, and needs that power to sustain itself on the other hand, the relation between power and cosmology is one of insoluble conflict. The tragic position of human cosmology is that it needs indiscriminate power to create order, but it must also reject indiscriminateness to maintain order.

Power confronts us with a blend of paradox (*coincidentia oppositorum*) and ambiguity. Stressing the aspect of paradox means emphasis on the ineluctable fissions which run through human life and the cosmos, the broken links between opposing categories. Stressing the aspects of ambiguity means emphasis on the fusion of opposites which is the counterpart of paradox: the 'impossible' blending of categories. Power is responsible for both fusion and fission, for both generation and destruction.

It should be emphasized that power is not merely a stage of primordial chaos preceding order. It is part and parcel of power to be concentrated in order, but still to permeate that order, and at the same time to dissolve order.

Tragic ambiguity only occasionally penetrates the walls of cosmological order, which is a fortunate state of affairs. Should man be permanently confronted with the power of ambiguity, he would be reduced to a totally uncivilized condition. Tragic are the lives of those people who are in contact with power as a generative force, which implies that they are at the roots of civilization. But as soon as civilization and cosmology have been instituted the contact of these culture heroes with power becomes dangerous; it becomes a threat to order, a pollution. Therefore the culture founders may be expelled as scapegoats; they remain ambiguous, because in being rejected they again bring power to the community and the cosmology. This controlled ambiguity is tragic because society has to sacrifice what forms its foundation—the heroic vehicles of power.

From another point of view the lives of these excessive characters are tragic because, as a consequence of their contact with power, they transcend human order in the direction of the sublime. But then they tend to forget that despite their heroic nature they remain humble mortals who are devoid of the fortitude necessary to endure contact with the am-

biguity and paradox of power. Inevitably, power turns against them and confronts them with their finite nature, for example by giving an unexpected turn to the meaning of their behaviour. In its contact with power this behaviour is certainly god-like, but the ambiguity of power, and the struggle of power with finiteness, make it subhuman and dangerously wild at the same time. Because finite heroes are unable to endure the terrible power they have confronted, they themselves are living ambiguities of power and violation. They are awesome in the full meaning of the word.

The position of tragic lives is not merely ambiguous, it is intrinsically conflicting as well. The power they are in contact with is holy, but that does not mean that it is unequivocal or good. This contact is dangerous, because power embodies destruction as well as generation, and because it is divided in itself. The human being who tries to employ its constructive aspects gets enmeshed in its destructive aspects. And when man tries to vindicate one divine principle he will tend to forget the opposite principles which belong to divine power as well, because his finite nature is unable to endure living paradox.

Because tragedy concerns cosmological ambiguity (in its Greek version embodied in the god Dionysus), it is beside the point to apply ethical categories here, for example to praise one or two protagonists, and to blame others (Segal DP 20). The tales of tragic lives are permeated with controlled ambiguity. The sacrifice of the exceptional individual, either in reality or by substitute, in a rite or on the stage, constitutes a separation of the beneficial from the dangerous aspects of power. On a different level, ambiguity is also controlled in the reciting of myth and in stage performances. In both cases a strictly demarcated space and time are set apart for the acting out of ambiguity, which normally has to be concealed or suppressed. Because the tale or the play are separated from real life, the confrontation with ambiguity can remain innocuous—it can form an enjoyment and a catharsis, a separation from dangerous emotions.

But this control of ambiguity by ritual separation and purification is not always able to suppress the reality of ambiguous and paradoxical power. Sometimes the realization breaks through that civilized order remains paradoxical because it thrives on disarray at the same time. And sometimes it is recognized that sacrifice, though beneficial to society and cosmology, is also an act of violation in which an individual like ourselves is victimized. Finally, the carefully separated areas of myth and tragedy are usually able to segregate normal man from the holy monsters which crowd the stage, but there are moments when people are aware, however vaguely, of the fact that tragic lives are exemplifications of concealed aspects of themselves, that tragic heroes are models of man.

When we say that tragic heroes are models of man we are not suggesting that myth or tragedy are concerned with psychology, or with man's free floating essence. Tragic heroes are models of ambiguous and paradoxical man in an ambiguous and paradoxical cosmos. Tragedy is concerned with the power that creates and destroys, that fuses and separates the fundamental cosmological categories man has to cope with: nature, culture, the gods, social relations, death, law and order, and insight.

3.2. Man and nature

In interconnected societies, nature is conceived as a living whole in which distinct categories like living/dead, man/animals are recognized, but are at the same time connected by internal links. In such societies, nature is not primarily an object of study, but an active force (Lienhardt DE 156, 280), of which man is not master but merely a variation. He has to come to terms with nature around him and in himself.

Cultures throughout the world emphasize the boundary which separates civilization from nature. This fundamental boundary is expressed in various ways, for example in the spatial code (village, cultivated land/wilderness), the alimentary code (cooked food/raw food), in the sexual code (regulated sex/permissiveness), etc. One example in which the force of interconnectedness is apparent is:

[...]a clear distinction which the Dinka make between the wilds (*roor*) and the homestead (*bai*), "the desert and the sown." The uninhabited forests are the homes of harmful, usually anonymous, anti-social Powers which cause suffering which has no constructive aspect. The distinction between the uncontrolled life of the wilds, without human order and reason, and the orderly and rational domesticated life of men and beasts in society, is thus reflected in a division of Powers into the non-rational and rational. (Lienhardt DE 63)

Transgressions of the cosmic order are feared, both in nature itself, and in man's ordering of it. Eclipses of the moon, extremely overdeveloped fruit, birds behaving abnormally, are transgressions endangering organized life. Natural anomalies may reflect human disorder: when man has exceeded his limits, nature is turned upside-down.⁵

In most cultures, man's identity is defined by his avoidance of intrusions of nature into his civilized conditions. But here marginality is ineluctable: because man is a corporeal being, he has to admit nature day

⁵ A Sumerian description of the result of human transgression runs: "Heaven was darkened, was overcast with shadow, it was turned into the nether world" (Pritchard ANET 613).

and night, in eating, defecating, mating, etc. As a consequence there is no end to the rules and precautions surrounding these margins between the self and the world. The boundaries between civilized man and uncivilized nature are often phrased in terms of purity and impurity. Intrusions of what should remain outside the civilized order tend to be regarded as pollutions: results of a confusion of the natural with the civilized, of the animal sphere with the human sphere.⁶

A serious problem arises when it is realized that man's civilization cannot be entirely separated from the polluted forces of nature, that it is partly sustained by them. Then some compromise between the untamed forces and canalizing order becomes necessary. The following Egyptian comparison shows that man needs the same natural force which sustains trees, but that he should be comparable to a civilized garden tree, not to an uncultivated one.

As for the passionate man in the temple, he is like a tree growing in the open. Suddenly (comes) its loss of foliage, and its end is reached in the shipyards; (or) it is floated far from its place, and a flame is its burial shroud. (But) the truly silent man holds himself apart. He is like a tree growing in a garden. It flourishes; it doubles its fruit. (Amenemope 6:1-12, in Frankfort et al. BP 126)

Here the problem of ambiguity becomes clear. On the one hand all that is natural is condemned as being wild, raw, unsophisticated and therefore polluted. On the other hand the garden of civilization needs to be fed with nature's power, which is polluting but lifegiving as well.⁷ The forces of nature must be channelled by procedures of controlled ambiguity. But underneath controlled ambiguity, in which the propitious aspects of nature are separated from the maleficent, tragic ambiguity

⁶ To the African Lele the basic cosmological distinction is that between man and animals. It is concentrated in the word *hama*, which refers to rotten, stinking things: dangerous marginal phenomena like corpses, excreta, suppurating wounds, clotted blood, vermin, frogs, toads, snakes, body dirt, used clothing. Man avoids *hama*, animals do not (Douglas IM 12).

⁷ This ambiguity is evident in Dinka culture: though the Dinka are extremely offended when they are compared to animals (Lienhardt DE 159), they are aware that civilization needs vital force. The word *wei* denotes both breath and life. It is the source of the vigorous animation of both animals and men. Those who possess a great measure of *wei* are vital, but they are dangerous as well. By their proximity to nature's primordial power they have the dual character of life-givers and death-dealers. The Dinka employ the forces of nature in procedures of controlled ambiguity: they erect sacrificial places outside the domestic neatness of the homestead. They leave these holy places in a natural state, in order to lead nature's awful powers into propitious channels (DE 260). Such controlled ambiguity is also seen in the meaning of untamed nature to the Lele. The distinction between forest and grassland is important in religious practice. The fertility of the forest contrasts with the barrenness of the grassland. The forest is seen as the place of God, the haunt of powerful spiritual beings, the source of all the necessities of life (Douglas IM 20).

may be hidden. Such tragic undertones may be perceived in the Dinka myths surrounding their culture founder, the ancestor of those who, as substitutes, bear the life of their people: the masters of the fishing spear. The first spearmaster, Aiwel Longar, began his culture-founding activities after a series of murders of his own people. When asked why he initially killed his people, the Dinka answer that this was as much part of his nature as his subsequent kindness. The good and the evil aspects of natural power are irremediably intermingled.⁸

The tragic ambiguity of the inseparableness of natural power, both underlying civilization and destroying it, which brings about the paradoxical situation of civilization embodying all that is pure and refined, but at the same time inevitably weakening the contact with the forces of nature, is very clear in the Accadian version of the Gilgamesh epic. As Kirk has rightly remarked, the opposition between nature and civilization plays an all-pervading role in the epic (M 132-33, 145-52).

Gilgamesh is two thirds god, and one third man. To increase his marginality, it is revealed that his godlike nature is also that of an animal: his mother was the wild cow of the steerfolds (Pritchard ANET 78). In the light of his excessive character it is understandable that his head was raised up above men: Gilgamesh was invested with kingship (*ibid*). But his high position in the city brings Gilgamesh into contact with the dangerous power of nature. He is "like a wild cow lofty" (Pritchard ANET 73), he possesses "a stormy heart" (Pritchard ANET 74). This brings him easily to the hubris of excessive and transgressing behaviour: "(Day) and (night) is unbridled his arro(gance)" (Pritchard ANET 73). He oversteps various cosmological boundaries, such as those of religion, family, marriage and the city. The result is a polluted community: "On the city he has heaped *defilement*, Imposing strange things on the *hapless* city" (Pritchard ANET 78). Thus in Gilgamesh the polluting and the creative aspects of his excessive power are inextricably intertwined.

Gilgamesh's counterpart, Enkidu, does not live in the city; on the contrary, he belongs completely to wild nature (his mother is a gazelle, his father a wild ass) (Pritchard ANET 506). He is the savage, living in the steppe (Pritchard ANET 75) in league with the wild beasts against the hunters. His wildness is rendered in a highly cumulative way: he feeds on grass, he drinks at the watering place, his hair is unkempt. Enkidu is a threat to culture: he destroys the hunters' traps. When they complain, Gilgamesh orders the acculturation of Enkidu. This happens in a

⁸ "Sometimes, when asked why Aiwel behaved as he did, the Dinka will reply, not unindulgently, 'ah, he was bad.' Bad, *rac*, can also have the meaning of 'extreme,' suggesting the pre-eminent possession of a quality" (Lienhardt DE 210).

suggestively ominous way: he is tamed by the ambiguous wiles of a harlot. Her feminine and, at the same time, urbanized power prevails against his bruteness: “She treated him, the savage, to a woman’s task” (Pritchard ANET 77). The result is a more and more civilized Enkidu: his hair is trimmed, he is clothed, he learns to eat bread and drink alcohol, he obtains weapons, and he becomes acquainted with hunting and herding. In short, he becomes like a god and like a man: “he now had (wi)sdom, (br)oader understanding” (Pritchard ANET 77). The price he has to pay is that he is rejected by his former companions, the wild animals, and that he forgets where he was born.

Finally he is sufficiently civilized to enter the city, where his real tragedy is revealed: he has lost his strength - “A *cry*, my friend, chokes my throat; my arms are limp, and my strength has turned to weakness” (Pritchard ANET 79). Both friends mirror aspects of tragic ambiguity. Gilgamesh’s force is so great that he becomes the upholder of the city, but in acquiring it he has come too near divine power. His human finiteness cannot endure this contact and his behaviour becomes ‘hybrid,’ not only in its normal biological sense, but also as referring to human hubris: by its divineness, it touches on the bestial. Enkidu, coming from the wilderness, learns to enjoy the advantages of civilization—but he loses his natural strength. Both heroes try to find a solution to their predicament by leaving the city for the wild forest and slaying the giant Huwawa: “That all evil from the land we may banish” (Pritchard ANET 79). But their endeavours are in vain; both are confronted with that ultimate intrusion of nature into culture: death.

3.3. Man and his gods

A Cartesian trying to understand the religion of interconnected societies will have to abandon a great many suppositions (more than Descartes could think of) and allow himself to stand emptyhanded in the face of a strange yet uncannily familiar world.

First of all, in an interconnected cosmology religion is not primarily something personal. It is ritualistic, which implies that it is essentially a public celebration. To the Dinka, for example, individual action in religious contexts is ineffective (Lienhardt DE 246-47). Secondly, in these cultures the divine is not transcendent; it permeates the whole cosmos. “Divinity is [...] comprehended in and through natural experience, and not merely as a theoretical force producing the order of the world from without” (DE 158). This implies that it is not pertinent to ask whether a power is in the sky or in man or anywhere else: it may be

everywhere at the same time (DE 148). Moreover, religious powers unite what we distinguish as the physical and the moral spheres in extensive metaphors (DE 161).

A third point is even harder to understand. To Europeans God is a person, and therefore polytheism is conceived of as a religion worshipping more persons than one. But this individualistic model has to be discarded altogether: in interconnected religions gods are not individuals, but refractions of divergent, often opposing qualities (cf. Lévi-Strauss' characterization of a mythical person as a "faisceau d'éléments différentiels" – AS II 162). They are nodal points of cumulative and dispersed functions. Gods can therefore only be specified by their function of the moment; at various times different, even opposing functions may be assigned to one god. Gods may even have each other's names as attributes: in Mesopotamia, for example, the god Marduk is the god Enlil when ruling and taking counsel is at stake, but he is Sin, the moon god, when he acts as illuminator of the night (Frankfort et al. BP 146). We shall first outline man's relations to the gods, and then the ambiguous nature of the gods in interconnected cultures.

In general, religious places and ceremonies are clearly divided from the profane. Contact with the religious sphere may demand a specific condition of purity: in the Leviticus not only morally impure people are barred as priests from the temple, but also the blind, the lame, the mutilated, hunchbacks, dwarfs, men with crushed testicles, etc. (Lev. 21:17ff). This boundary marking is essential because religious places and rituals are examples of the marginal space between mortals and immortals: they are both in this world and in another world, one which would be inaccessible without these mediating bridges (Leach CC 71). This marginality extends to holy people, especially if they do not belong to an official priesthood. Prophets, shamans, seers, who claim to be in direct contact with the divine, bodily express their independence of normal order. They lead a solitary life in the wilderness, dressed in coarse clothing and eating uncooked food, such as locusts and wild honey (Leach SIM 37), thus gathering strength from uncivilized power; a Christian example is St. John the Baptist, who lived in the desert and wore skins. These marginals may be stigmatized by defects of the body, for example, among the Nuer, by blindness (Lienhardt DE 68), which at the same time compensate for their divine insight.

From the point of view of order, the marginality of the religious sphere may involve the danger of pollution and the need for purification after contact with it. In the Old Testament worshippers had to wash after touching a sacred book or garment; in present-day Catholicism the communion chalice must be wiped after the mass before a profane person can

handle it (Parker M 179). This points to the fact that the religious sphere is a sphere of danger, towards which two attitudes are possible. On the one hand there is the demand for purity, as in the example of Israel's temple. On the other hand there are—often in the same religion—currents which indulge in ritual ambiguity: things and acts normally deemed dirty are accepted, even encouraged (Leach CC 74).

The most obvious example of controlled ambiguity in religion is sacrifice, the most holy act of which, bloodshed, would under normal circumstances be a dreadful deed. This ambiguity is not unknown to the Christian religion, it lies at its very heart. The central sacrifice here is not just that of an animal, but that of the god-man himself: the supreme sacrament of the Eucharist involves the symbolic eating of the body and blood of the divine victim. As John 6:53 has it: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

It is understandable that a failure in the ritual separation within ritual ambiguity may make the tragic ambiguity apparent. In what Girard calls a "sacrificial crisis" (VS 66, 76), the beneficial and the deleterious aspects of power have become inseparable. Such a ritual crisis may develop when the religious centre of society breaks through his ritual role, as in the case of a furious Dinka spearmaster:

It is said that a master of the fishing-spear who is really angry with his people may break the shaft of his fishing-spear before them, and scatter the ashes of his cattle-hearth. This is supposed to bring disaster for the tribe or subtribe which has given offence. The breaking of the spear represents the destruction of the spiritual power which had sustained them, and the scattering of ashes represents the dispersion of the people. (Lienhardt DE 255)

Such a ritual crisis points to the tragic ambiguity which lies at the foundation of religion, and which remains apparent even when controlled ambiguity succeeds: the beneficial slaughter in sacrifice is still slaughter, the crucifixion of Jesus remains murder. That religion and violation of order are so closely intertwined indicates the ambiguous nature of religious power itself.

Even outside ritual, man's position with respect to the divine is difficult. This is connected with man's awesome force which makes him, in certain respects, godlike. But at the same time man remains a finite being who depends upon the religious sphere and can never become independent. The first problem is that, insofar as he feels his finiteness, man wants his gods to be in the vicinity, but never really knows whether they are there, or have turned away from him. Even sacrifice is not able to coerce the gods, as the Dinka know, who call their Divinity both near and far (DE 38).

A second problem, mirroring the first, is that in times of hope and expansion man himself is in contact with power, and therefore is prone to deny the inevitability of the proximity of the divine, even to assimilate himself with it. But then the undesirable nearness of the gods may be revealed in the punishment for self-deification. This tragic position of mankind is outlined in an Accadian song:

When they are hungry they resemble corpses.
 When they are sated they rival their god;
 In good luck they speak of ascending to heaven,
 When they are afflicted they grumble about going down to the underworld.
 (Pritchard ANET 435)

The nature of man's tragic ambiguity only becomes clear when the character of the gods in an interconnected cosmology is revealed. What we have to bear in mind is that in such a cosmology the divine is not only the preserver of order, but also, and primarily, a power which is indifferent to human prosperity and adversity.

Even in the Jewish religion God is an unpredictable, whimsical power. In the second book of Samuel we are told about a census held by King David. He is repentant afterwards, because it has angered God, who punished his people severely by sending a plague which took seventy thousand lives. The salient point in the story is that it was God himself who had exhorted David to hold the census (2 Sam. 24:1-25. Interestingly, in 1 Chron. 21:1 it is Satan who provokes David into doing so). This conception of God as an awful and dangerous power lives on in our era in the invocation "Lead us not into temptation," and in the words of St. Paul "whom he will he hardeneth" (Rom. 9:18). In polyvalent religions, with opposing divine forces, the paradox increases. Gilgamesh and Enkidu for example are spurred on by the gods to commit awful transgressions, but they are subsequently punished by other gods, and sometimes even by the same gods, quarreling among themselves.

The most dreadful aspect of polyvalent religions is that not only opposing categories are represented, like masculine/feminine, and celestial/chthonian, but marginality, transgression and pollution as well, in the immoral spirits connected with madness. A prototype is the free divinity Macardit in Dinka religion. A sacrifice to this god differs from all others. Its flesh is not respected and the sacrifice is not performed in the centre of the home, but in the marginal space between human habitation and the forest (Lienhardt DE 82). This reflects the ambiguous position of Macardit as a harmful divinity of the wilds who nevertheless visits the homes with suffering and sterility. He presides over the ending of good things; the inevitable, sometimes brutal curtailment of human life

(DE 81). Despite his noxious power, Macardit has to be worshipped as part of Divinity.

This tragic situation is even more poignant in the position of the goddesses of love in ancient Mesopotamia. In a Sumerian hymn to the ambiguous goddess Inanna (Pritchard ANET 579-82) it is revealed at the start that we are dealing with a goddess whose interference is not confined to the domain of sex. She is the goddess of the ambiguous power which both underlies and destroys order, and of which the force of passion is but one manifestation. Certainly, Inanna is the "life-giving woman," "who multiplies (all) living creatures (and) peoples." But at the same time she is the goddess of destruction: "You have filled the land with venom, like a dragon. Vegetation ceases, when you thunder like Ishkur. You who bring down the Flood from the mountain."

As a goddess of ambiguous power Inanna is a "rampant wild cow," and connected with war (ANET 580). Man's tragically ambiguous position with respect to Inanna is revealed by the fact that this force of destruction must not be neglected in worship—otherwise she would make the city childless.

A similar position is occupied by the Accadian goddess Ishtar in the Gilgamesh epic. She offers her love to Gilgamesh, who refuses her because she reduced her former human lovers to an animal state: a shepherd was turned into a wolf, a gardener became a spider (Pritchard ANET 84). Ishtar's ambiguity is not completely revealed until we realize that her power is also the foundation of civilization. Her natural lovers, the bird, the lion and the horse, undergo a reverse fate: they are tamed by the cunning devices of culture. By the power of her love the wings of the bird are broken, the lion is trapped in pits. For the horse she has ordained the whip, the spur and the lash. This goddess is a living contradiction of destructive barbarism and civilizing power.

3.4. Social relations

In interconnected societies, individuals are not primarily self-sustaining monads but nodes in the interweaving of different relations. This implies that these cultures tend to maintain strict boundaries to mark off social differences.

That the group and not the individual is the centre of thought has implications for the punishment of transgressions as well. It is not necessarily confined to the individual transgressor: punishment is as contagious as pollution. Joshua 7:24, for example, tells us of Achan, who is chosen as a substitute victim for the defeats of Israel. Achan stole a Babylonian garment, gold and silver. For this offence God not only

punished the miscreant, but the whole of Israel. When Achan was selected as a sacrificial victim, it was not only he who was stoned and burned, but, because of contagion, the garment, the silver, the gold, his sons and daughters, his oxen, asses and sheep, and his tent as well.

The unity of the group may be so strong that offence given to another member of the group is conceived of as pollution of oneself. Cannibalizing a member of one's own group, for example, is considered autophagy (Lévy-Bruhl SN 244-45). Then the punishment of the transgressor by the group is also a self-punishment. In the same context, an execution may also be a case of suicide (SN 246).

We shall now consider the importance of transgression, pollution and ambiguity in the Lévi-Straussian triad: filiation, consanguinity and marriage, and then the relation between kinship and the larger community.

Within the family the hierarchy of filiation, the differentiation between parents and children, is often maintained by a strict division between old and young. The Lele, for example, lay particular emphasis on the distinction between men and animals, which is expressed in the dictum that only man knows of shame (*buhonyi*) in acts like sex and defecation. By transformation this concept also serves to distinguish the young from the older members of the family, especially the father.

Quarrels with older members of the family are feared as dangerous forms of instability. They may be considered pollutions, spreading by disease, poor crops etc. (Lévy-Bruhl SN 47-48). The worst transgression in this context is of course patricide. Its controlled ambiguity is revealed in the myths in which the father has to be killed, often dismembered, by the son who by this act institutes the necessary cosmological separations.

Despite the strictness of the boundary between fathers and sons, it is understandable that insoluble conflicts tend to emerge, especially when the question of marriage arises and the father should withhold his permission. As in the relation between gods and men, there is a tension between conjunction and separation. Sons want independence, but cannot really expect to sever the ties with their parents (Lienhardt DE 42).

The solidarity of the family is not only maintained in the vertical relationship between parents and children, but in consanguinity, the lateral ties between siblings as well. As Girard has remarked (VS 93ff.), one of the most abhorrent conflicts, which may undermine the solidarity of the family, is the theme of the hostile brothers. We do not believe, as Girard does, that their similarity is feared, but that there is a conflict between their similarity on the one hand, and the need for one to prevail over the other where the father's inheritance is at stake on the other hand. The Old Testament is full of stories about such conflicts, in which controlled ambiguity plays a dominant role. The most famous example is that of the

sons of Isaac. Their conflict is that Esau is the elder, but he is a marginal (a hunter living in the wilds – Gen. 25:27) and a transgressor (he marries two foreign women, saddening his parents – Gen. 26:35). The younger son Jacob, however, is a cattlebreeder. By using the cunning of his civilized power, pretending to be shaggy and offering his father a dish of mock venison, Jacob steals Esau's blessing, having first obtained his birthright. In this particular case the balance is restored because Jacob is punished in a way mirroring his transgression: he hopes to win Laban's second daughter Rachel, but by a deceit similar to his own gets the first-born Leah. Eventually the brothers are reconciled, Esau having accepted various kinds of cattle from Jacob (Gen. 32, 33). Esau's transgressions are reversed: the necessity of endogamy is emphasized, and Esau accepts the necessity of cattlebreeding.

Such a happy solution does not ensue in the conflict between Cain and Abel (Gen. 4). The ritual ambiguity here only partly disguises a veritable tragedy. The first-born, Cain, is a farmer, whereas the second son, Abel, is the marginal (a shepherd). In this case the conflict is of a religious nature: God does not accept Cain's sacrifice, but he does accept that of Abel. A possible reason for Cain's rejection is the nature of his sacrifice, fruit, whereas that of Abel is a bloody sacrifice of the first-born of the flock. After this episode Cain kills Abel. In one way this is plain fratricide, a terrible pollution. Cain is cursed by the earth, the soil will no longer yield. But there is every reason to consider the slaying of Abel as the making of sacrificial amends as well. Only after the fratricide is Cain accepted by God. He is even marked by a stigma (cf. Aycock in Leach SIM 113-18), so that no vengeance will be taken on him. As an outstanding transgressor, Cain is an ambiguous figure: he is a source of destructive power which is subsequently employed for the institution of culture—Cain is the founder of the first city, he is the forebear of cattlebreeders, of musicians, and of coppersmiths and ironsmiths. Cain's ritual ambiguity as a polluted but a great culturefounder can barely hide the tragic situation that culture is based on the violence of a man who severed his most intimate family ties.

In interconnected societies the solidarity of the family extends through generations by way of marriage. A family without heirs loses importance, which means that fear of extinction is predominant. It is a prerequisite for maintaining the family through procreation that the roles of man and woman should be clearly defined: effeminate behaviour in men might result in impotency, as witnessed by a Hittite ritual.⁹

⁹ "I shall place a mirror (and) a distaff in the sacrificer's (hand). He will pass under the gate, I shall take the mirror (and) the distaff away from him. I shall (g)ive him a bow

Women are in direct contact with nature by menstruation and childbearing, and in patrilocal societies they have to leave their family to live with the family of their husbands, so that they do not really belong to either of these families or to both. Therefore they are excellent candidates for a position of marginality. As marginal, sometimes polluted beings, women are near to the indiscriminate powers of destruction and generation. It is through them that a family lineage dies off or prospers (Lienhardt DE 199, cf. Buruma SZ 16). This ambiguous power of women is further enhanced when they transcend their already dangerous feminine status: on the one hand they may commit excesses in sexuality, in extreme cases become whores, on the other hand they may fail in their procreative task by remaining barren. Both transgressions are ambiguous sources of power.

The biblical myth of Lot (Gen 19) is a case in point. In the course of the story Lot loses all possibility of continuing his line by the women surrounding him. The inhabitants of Sodom who besiege his house want to commit sodomy with men, and refuse Lot's offer of his daughters as substitutes. His sons-in-law refuse to follow him when he flees from the city and his wife dies during the flight. Afterwards, Lot does not remain in the city of Zoar, where he might have found husbands for his daughters, but goes to live in the wilderness, thus obstructing his daughters' duty to continue his line. Yet there is reason to suppose that it was precisely this transgression that gave him his high position: the only male to be saved from the conflagration. His daughters do not acquiesce in this transgression, however, and complain: "[...]there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth." They resort to a counter-transgression and commit incest with their father. This excess is as ambiguous as was the former deficiency, because out of this union sprang two whole peoples: the Moabites and the Ammonites.

The power inherent in barrenness is detectable in many biblical women who gave birth to exceptional, ambiguous children long after their natural age of childbearing, e.g. Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Elizabeth (Leach CC 73). These biblical instances exemplify controlled ambiguity: barrenness is eventually compensated for by abundant procreation. Tragically ambiguous is the position of a barren woman whose awful power does not result in abundant offspring, but who both defends and threatens the continuation of her family.

(and arrows) and while doing so I shall speak as follows: 'See I have taken womanliness from thee and given thee manliness. Thou hast cast off the ways of a women, now (show) the ways of a man' " (Pritchard ANET 349).

In interconnected societies individuals are not only dependent upon their kin, but upon the larger community as well. The community protects its boundaries by carefully distinguishing itself from its neighbours in sets of cosmological transformations. Its own group may, for example, be opposed to foreigners as the civilized to the wild, and as the religious to the irreligious.¹⁰ Maintaining the group stability by searching out marginals and polluters and eradicating them is a well-known procedure. This restoring of a whole community's balance is only feasible when the mechanism of substitution is employed: whereas a community may stigmatize persons, families, or subgroups as supposedly dangerous transgressors, it cannot punish itself as a whole when it is polluted without becoming suicidal.

An important mode of substitution, in which controlled ambiguity is employed, is violent sacrifice. When discord within the community is transferred to the sacrificial animal, the 'acting out' of violence may have a unifying effect. Harmony is restored by separation and by transferring the discord to the victim. In a famous Dinka sacrifice, in which the victim is thrown to the ground and trampled to death by the whole community, controlled ambiguity is created by the tribe acting as a single, undifferentiated body in a normally forbidden act. After this catharsis, the victim is divided and distributed exactly according to prevailing social distinctions: social differentiation has been recreated (Lienhardt DE 234).

In interconnected societies, the whole of the community may be represented by its leader, chief or king. They are the paradoxical 'marginals of the centre.' As a transcendent human, the king is in direct contact with power, which, channelled through him, is what the community thrives on. In order to preserve and regulate their excessive power, kings are often encouraged to commit transgressions, but under strict ritual precepts. The Lele, for instance, exhort their king to behave like an animal, without shame (Douglas IM 24). But because the king is in direct contact with dangerous, unspecified power, he does not merely uphold the fabric of society, he endangers it as well. This danger is the more pressing because as a vehicle of power the king remains a finite human being, whose strength may not be sufficient for the enormousness of his task. Therefore infinite care is taken to separate the king's divine aspects from his bestial ones. In the annual New Year's rite

¹⁰ For example, the dietary rules of the biblical Israelites reflected their distinction between tamed and wild nature, and between religious purity and impurity, but these distinctions also separated the Jews from foreigners. Because of their feeding habits, the latter were considered unfit for marriage with the pure daughters of Israel (Douglas IM 267).

in Babylon, for example, the godlike king was ritually humiliated and reduced to total inferiority (cf. ANET 334).

The ritual separation of the king's greatness from his bestiality may also be achieved by a second substitution. As happened e.g. in Hittite rituals (ANET 355), a mock king from the lower marginals is installed and subsequently expelled, laden with the baser aspects of royal power. A similar procedure may be followed in times of dangerous transgressions such as pestilence. The focusing of impurity on a kingly victim to be separated from the community may have cathartic effects.¹¹

It is understandable that in such a delicate balance of order and power a slight digression from ritual may result in tragedy, for example if a king should abuse his power, and ignore the warnings of prophets or seers. In such a situation the king becomes a living contradiction: a divided unity of an animal and a god. In kings, therefore, tragic conflicts may be concentrated, especially conflicts between the claims of family and those of the community, resulting in conflicting duties. A biblical example of truly tragic impact may serve to illustrate this.

King David and his son Absalom became locked in a terrible struggle. Having been raped by her other brother, Amnon, Absalom's sister Tamar had transgressed the boundaries between family and marriage. Absalom retaliated for the shame heaped upon Tamar's head (and upon his own) by murdering Amnon. Though in the beginning David wept over this lost son, he was soon comforted and longed for Absalom (2 Sam. 13:39). But Absalom had fled from his family, and even when David allowed him to come back, he forbade Absalom to see his face (2 Sam. 14:24). Though a reconciliation ensued, Absalom had gathered so much strength in his period of seclusion, that he successfully challenged his father's throne and was anointed King of Israel (2 Sam. 19:10). The seal was put upon his victory when he "went in unto his father's concubines" in public (2 Sam. 16:21).

This royal sexual transgression is fundamentally ambiguous. It is an evil pollution, but it is also a just punishment of David. Apparently sexual transgressions were common in this royal family: earlier, David had taken Bathsheba from her husband Uriah the Hittite, to mention only one example. According to the prophecy of Nathan (the only marginal to correct the royal marginal), for this transgression David would be punished in the following way:

¹¹ "If people are dying in the country and if some enemy god has caused that, I act as follows: They drive up one ram. They twine together blue wool, red wool, yellow wool, black wool and white wool, make it into a crown and crown the ram with it. They drive the ram on to the road leading to the enemy" (Pritchard ANET 347).

Thus saith the *Lord*, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. (2 Sam. 12:11)

Thus Absalom's position is tragically ambiguous: he does not only transgress, but is an instrument of divine justice as well: God makes use of him in order at least partly to fulfil Nathan's prediction. But David's predicament is no less tragic: in order to regain royal power he has to fight his own son Absalom, who is killed by his men. Though Absalom had sought to murder him (2 Sam. 16:11), David would have preferred dying as his substitute (2 Sam. 18:33). King David is revealed as a divided man: as King he won, as father he lost, and this inner conflict immediately spread to the people he represented: "And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people" (2 Sam. 19:2). David's tragic position was unacceptable to them: they felt that he preferred his family to the community, that he had reversed the most essential distinctions:

[...]thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well. (2 Sam. 19:6).

The conciliatory ritual subsequently carried out (David goes out of the seclusion of his house and sits in the public gate so as to encounter the people) cannot conceal his tragic conflict between kinship and kingship.

With his wild character, Absalom comes near to being a tragic hero: he is the powerful marginal who tries to overthrow existing order, but is eventually sacrificed for the sake of that order. David the King is torn by an insoluble conflict of loyalties between his family and his people.

3.5. Life and death

In accordance with the tight social bonds prevailing in interconnected cultures, immortality is not primarily a personal affair. People care more about continuing their names, in descendants (cf. Lienhardt DE 26) or in fame in the community (cf. Gilgamesh in ANET 79). The consolation of immortality is not always sufficient to hide the tragic aspects of death, however. Man's active, expansive nature is felt to be contradicted by its sudden curtailment by death. An ominous sign of man's mortality is his need for sleep, which by transformation also separates him from the gods. In the beginning Gilgamesh, for example, boasts of his expansive qualities, his traversing of lands, mountains and seas, adding that his face is not sated with sleep (ANET 92). But his need of sleep eventually

reveals this as hubris: it robs him of his herb of rejuvenation. The snake, which is immortal because it constantly renews its skin, takes the herb away while Gilgamesh is sleeping. This reveals Gilgamesh's (and mankind's) tragic position in the face of death (ANET 96). Small wonder then, that it is unacceptable to Gilgamesh that in death he will sleep through all the years: "Let mine eyes behold the sun" (ANET 89).

It is not surprising that in interconnected cultures fear of violent death with its concomitant contagious pollution should reign supreme. Even rightful killing (e.g. in war) may constitute a pollution which needs purification (cf. Chagnon YFP 186, ANET 83). Infinitely more dangerous is bloodshed in peaceful circumstances.¹² On this point it is important to emphasize the fact that pollution has nothing to do with intention: the transgression of bloodshed not only affects the killer, but the victim and his kin may be dangerously contaminated as well.

Blood that coagulates on the ground, or clots on the hands, is always felt to be a focus of pollution. This makes it understandable that in the controlled ambiguity of sacrificial killing separation may consist of the avoidance of bloodshed. As Lévy-Bruhl remarks:

There is no doubt that the majority of primitive peoples make a distinction between homicide and lethal bloodshed. In certain cases in which the group has decided to execute one of its members (for example for witchcraft or incest), measures will be taken that no blood should appear. The sorcerer will be burned; the committer of incest drowned, hanged or flogged to death' (SN 353-54, cf. 344-45, Girard VS 46).

In the controlled ambiguity of sacrificial killing, man sometimes hopes to come into contact with the power which sustains life and is the dispenser of death. The victim may be put to death as a substitute for the sacrificer, who hopes thus to retain life. This hope is also fed by the idea that the detrimental aspect of power will be exorcized by the offering of a victim.¹³ This pattern is recognizable in the human sacrifice of the spearmaster as practised by the Dinka: when this central marginal, on whom the life of his people depends, feels that he is going to die, he is, during a solemn ceremony, buried alive at his own request (Lienhardt DE 316).

¹² King David's reproach of Joab, for example, was not that he had shed blood, but that he "shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that where on his feet" (1 Kings 2:5).

¹³ "The darting of the spear which, in the myths, originally brings death to human beings, is re-enacted in the sacrificial rites but directed against an animal victim. It is amply clear that this beast dies in place of men[...]both myth and rite represent the conversion of a situation of death into a situation of life[...]It is clear, then, that an important feature of sacrifice is that the people for whom it is made enact the death of a victim which in important respects represents themselves, in order to survive that death" (Lienhardt DE 296)

What remains of the living body after death, the corpse, is a pre-eminent representative of marginality. It is no longer human, but it has not yet been reduced to natural matter either. It hovers between nature and culture, between life and death, between belonging to the family and being separated from it. Their marginality makes corpses vulnerable to pollution which may spread by contiguity (the bed, the house of the deceased) and by likeness (kinsmen at great distance from the body are contaminated (cf. Lévy-Bruhl SN 303-09, Lienhardt DE 290)). Of course the pollution of a corpse may be even more terrible when death has been violent (Lévy-Bruhl SN 297).

This implies that the separation of the power of death by burial rites is of extreme importance in interconnected cultures. These rites of passage gradually separate the living from the dead. The former eventually lose their polluted status and return to normal life, the latter are aggregated into the category of ancestors (Leach CC 84). Because non-observance of burial rites breaks through this separation it may unleash a terrible scourge. The dead haunt the living in their prolonged marginality (cf. Pritchard ANET 99), and may even harm them (Lienhardt DE 290). The ambiguous power of being left unburied may in its turn be controlled by ritual in order to enhance the force of the living. Thus among the Dinka those killed in battle are left unburied, as a reminder that they still have to be revenged (DE 290).

This ritual ambiguity is even more poignant in the punishment of transgressors who are left unburied to be devoured by wild or marginal animals like birds and dogs. In this way King Jeroboam and his house are punished (1 Kings 14:11): "Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat" (cf. 1 Kings 21:23,24; 2 Kings 9:10). Here, as in European medieval examples,¹⁴ the force of this 'pollution of the polluted' is used as a strengthening of the community. That such an exposure might be dangerous can be inferred from the second book of Samuel. When the land was stricken by a famine which lasted three years, King David began the usual hunt for scapegoats. The blame was transferred to the house of Saul: seven of his descendants were sacrificed at the beginning of the harvest (2 Sam. 21:1-9). Then the mother of two of the seven kept a vigil underneath the hanged, and she "suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night" (2 Sam. 21:10). Only after David had taken this to heart and had solemnly

¹⁴ In 1411 the traitor Colinet de Puiseux was taken down from the gibbet two years after his decapitation and dismembering. Even then the body was not considered worthy of burial: it was burnt and given to the dogs to eat (Ariès HM 50-51).

gathered the bones of the hanged, together with the bones of Saul and Jonathan, which had been shamefully exposed as well (1 Sam. 31:9, 10), could God be entreated to heal the land.

3.6. Law and order

In interconnected cosmologies there is no separation between the order of nature and man-made laws: law and order coincide. The same discipline regulates the behaviour of the planets, which are forbidden to stray from their orbits (cf. Pritchard ANET 67) and that of human beings. It is by the all-enveloping cosmic order that the interconnectedness of the fundamental categories is guaranteed.

Cosmic order is pre-eminently embodied in the law of talion, the principle that the universal balance of forces is only preserved if every act is offset by the inverse act, equal and contrary to the original act (cf. Lévy-Bruhl SN 500). The law of the talion has two complementary sides: it demands that credit should be given where credit is due and that violations of order should be punished by similar counteraction. The talion of credit and that of revenge mirror each other (Guépin TP 151-53). The system of talion regulates all categories.

The order of nature is conceived as reflecting moral order: physical disaster is a talion for human transgression. Religious sacrifice functions according to the talion of credit: it puts the gods under an obligation by its gift. On the other hand, it serves to deflect the human talion of vengeance to victims who themselves are not able to retaliate. The cosmic talion brings terror to potential transgressors and satisfaction to their victims: all violations of religious order are believed to disturb its balance which will inevitably be restored by divine retribution.¹⁵

With respect to fundamental social relations like those of the family and community, a salient aspect of the law of talion is that it forges a link between the generations. A physical defect such as blindness is not necessarily connected with the sins of the blind man himself; it may be due to sins committed by one of his forebears. This long-term effect of talion is illustrated in the New Testament: "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2). A clear example of the solidarity of the family through the law of talion comes from a Hittite prayer on the occasion of a plague considered a scourge of a god:

¹⁵ The Dinka, for example, have no problem with the prosperous sinner: they are certain that Divinity will eventually bring retribution (Lienhardt DE 46-47), which implies that human justice is only provisional. It may be refuted by the ultimate results of the workings of divine justice: "Divinity is made the final judge of right and wrong, even when men feel sure that they are in the right" (DE 47). The seriousness of a transgression need not become clear until the disaster ensuing has been revealed (DE 53-55).

It is only too true that man is sinful. My father sinned and transgressed against the word of the Hattian Storm-god, my lord. But I have not sinned in any respect. It is only too true, however, that the father's sin falls upon the son. So, my father's sin has fallen upon me. (Pritchard ANET 395, cf. Lienhardt DE 72)

It is clear that death demands retaliation if it has been of a violent nature. The duty to take revenge is not a mere emotional need for a *vendetta*: it is a cosmologically founded duty, neglect of which may expose the individual or the group to danger. This danger is not neutralized until the balance has been restored (Lévy-Bruhl SN 502-03).

In sacrificial ritual, such a transgression of the law of talion is inevitably used in a controlledly ambiguous way. Sacrifice is violent, but ritual precautions are taken to separate its beneficial force from potential retaliation. Important to this end is the vicarious violence towards substitute victims from which no retaliation need be expected (Girard VS 28, 142). This fear of vengeance may culminate in the sacrificer excusing himself to his victim, or in a symbolic punishment of the sacrificer.¹⁶ Another way of ritually separating the dangerous aspects of violent transgression of the law of talion is to emphasize the submissiveness of the victim (Lienhardt DE 237) or even its willingness to die (e.g. the pangolin of the Lele, the Dinka spearmaster). A beautiful example of this separative procedure can be found in the promised sacrifice of the Messiah as described in Isaiah 53. The Messiah is a substitute for the community as a whole (53:6: "[...]the *Lord* hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.") He is a kingly victim (52:15: "[...]the kings shall shut their mouths at him"), but he is not to be feared, for he comes from the stratum of the lower marginals (53:3: "He is despised and rejected of men"). Above all the victim's willingness is emphasized (53:7 "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter").

The order of the *lex talionis* has never been so close as to conceal its tragic aspects. The delay in the retaliation for sins is often so extended that the credibility of the system falters. The mills of the gods grind so slowly that their movement becomes imperceptible (cf. Dodds GI 33). And the solidarity of the generations does not always conceal the fact that individuals are too often the innocent victims of the cosmic movement.

¹⁶ "On s'excusait de l'acte qu'on allait accomplir, on gémissait de la mort de la bête, on la pleurait comme un parent. On lui demandait pardon avant de la frapper. On s'adressait au reste de l'espèce à laquelle elle appartenait comme à un vaste clan familial que l'on suppliait de ne pas venger le dommage qui allait être causé dans la personne d'un de ses membres. Sous l'influence des mêmes idées, il arrivait que l'auteur du meurtre était puni; on le frappait ou on l'exilait" (M. Mauss O 233-34).

Understandably, individuals protest time and again against the injustice of cosmic justice. The Babylonian theodicy complains: "Those who do not seek the god go the way of prosperity/While those who pray to the goddess become destitute and impoverished" (Pritchard ANET 602), and Jeremiah utters a similar lamentation: "Righteous art thou, o Lord, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" (Jer. 12:1ff).

The doubt concerning the law of talion may go even deeper. Sometimes it becomes questionable whether talion matters at all, since death does not differentiate between the just and the wicked. In a 'pessimistic' Accadian dialogue this doubt is expressed as follows: "Climb the mounds of ancient ruins and walk about: look at the skulls of late and early (men); who (among them) is an evil-doer, who a public benefactor?" (Pritchard ANET 438). Such misgivings point to the fundamental tragic paradox that the order of talion can only be maintained by violence and counter-violence, by violation and counterviolation, meaning that order is inextricably intertwined with disorder. As long as the mechanism of substitution and controlled ambiguity is in operation, the essential violence of talion can be concealed, but from time to time a ritual crisis sets in (cf. Girard VS 196). A grim example of tragic ambiguity can be found in the breaking loose of unrestricted *vendetta* among the Kaingang in Brasil, resulting in social suicide, as described by Jules Henry:

With a single murder the murderer enters a locked system. He must kill and kill again, he must plan whole massacres lest a single survivor remain to avenge his kin. Kaingang murderers are like the characters of Greek tragedy in the grip of a natural law whose processes once started can never be stayed. (Henry JP 53)

3.7. Darkness and insight

Human beings survive in a dark and dangerous cosmos by using their capacities of insight: by making cosmological differentiations in order to avoid chaos and confusion. In interconnected cultures the distinction between 'real truth' and 'mere appearances' is well known. But it is not parallel to the distinction between pure and impure knowledge, as it is in Cartesian cosmology. In interconnected cultures, a degree of purity is attained by man's ordering of the cosmos, but it is realized that to a certain extent this human order violates 'true' reality, that of indiscriminate power. From the human point of view, this reality is not clear and distinct, however, but dangerous, ambiguous and paradoxical.

This state of affairs may be inferred from contact with power by means of oracles and divination. In both cases the resulting knowledge, sup-

posed to be truer than ordinary knowledge, is multi-interpretable and potentially dangerous. The inability of man to reach pure truth is exemplified in the cosmology of the African Dogon. To them the universe is divided between two deities: Nommo is the heavenly power which represents justice, reason and order; his brother, the Pale Fox, is a confusing god who once committed incest and has fallen into disgrace. He represents enigma and disorder, in short, power. In contrast to the division in the Cartesian cosmology, Nommo presides over the truth of ordinary experience, whereas the real truth behind human experiences belongs to the confusing Fox, who employs an obscure sign language:

[...]the Dogon are as convinced as Plato that the world of appearances and sensation is not the whole of truth. They recognize another kind of reality[...] For Plato the world of appearance is confused and shadowy and the world of ideas is bright. The Dogon reverse the light and shade. They situate real truth (the sifting of lies and contradictions) in the shadowy realm of the Pale Fox. Formal appearances they place in the daylight world of Nommo. (Douglas IM 130)

If man cannot live without separating the pure from the impure by knowledge, but if at the same time purity of knowledge is only a phenomenon occurring in human beings and contradicting the darkness of real truth (which is self-contradictory and confusing), man's cosmological position is tragic. Man's problem is that he realizes that divine truth exists, that his cosmological order is not all there is, but that he is unable to endure the dangerous contact with true power. Truth exceeds his finite endurance. Therefore man has to resort to the ordering of experience, which is not able to expel the dangers of true power, however.

On the one hand, the fear of dangerous truth leads to efforts to stay within the limits of finiteness, to try to avoid the hubris of contact with reality (cf. Pritchard ANET 595). On the other hand, the tragedy is that human cosmologies are not strong enough to maintain the purity of order. Man's finiteness implies that pure knowledge is withheld from him, that truth and falsehood are given to him in an inseparable mixture (Pritchard ANET 440).

When man is confronted with ambiguous reality outside his own conception, he realizes that his human order in reality is disorder: his conceptions of true and false, of good and evil are constantly overthrown. Because man ignores the true designs of the gods (but knows that they are there), his life consists of inevitable tragic erring. Human beings constantly commit transgressions from the divine point of view, while they believe that they are staying within bounds from the human point of view:

The transgression which I have committed, indeed, I do not know. The sin which I have done, indeed, I do not know. The forbidden thing which I have eaten, indeed, I do not know. The prohibited (place) on which I have set foot, indeed, I do not know.[...]When the goddess was angry with me, she made me become ill[...]Mankind, everyone that exists,—what does he know? Whether he is committing sin or doing good, he does not even know. (Pritchard ANET 391, cf. 434-37)

This tragic position may be reflected in the language embodying ambiguous truth. This language contains surface meanings on a purely human level, concealing the real meaning hidden from man's finite understanding and only revealed after disaster has overtaken him. An example of such tragically ironic language, in which the surface intention hides invisible meanings, can be found in the story of the Noah of the Gilgamesh epic, Upanishtim. The wily god Ea makes Upanishtim say to the people:

To the Deep I will therefore go down,
To dwell with my lord Ea.
(But upon) you he will shower down abundance,
(A choice of) birds, a hiding of fishes
(*The land shall have its fill*) of harvest riches
(He who at dusk orders) the husk-greens,
Will shower upon you a rain of wheat.
(Pritchard ANET 93)

Ironically, this speech is true in a way that cannot be understood by the people: Upanishtim will go down with Ea to the deep, but not, as the citizens are led to believe, to be submerged, but to be saved. They, on the other hand, will obtain a rich harvest (but it is of human lives), the earth will become a hiding-place of fishes indeed (because of the deluge), the rain of wheat will be a rain of misfortune.

Man's tragic position, his contact with truth, and his inability to endure it, are admirably illustrated in the Accadian story of Adapa, "the model of men" (Pritchard ANET 101). The god Ea had given Adapa "Wide understanding[...]to disclose the designs of the land." This boon gives Adapa tremendous capabilities: he is able to observe religious rites, take care of bread and water, steer ships, catch fish. His contact with truth even enables him to break the wing of the south wind by means of a curse. But here the reverse side of his awful power of insight is revealed: employing the curse turns out to be a deed of hubris unacceptable to the gods. Man's knowledge appears to be too great for his humble status of a finite being: "Why did Ea to a *worthless* human of the heaven And of the earth the plan disclose, Rendering him *distinguished* And making a name for him?"

The result of Adapa's contact with truth is that he has polluted his community by his excessive behaviour (Pritchard ANET 102). Then Ea shows the humble reality of Adapa's knowledge: he deceives him by saying that the bread and water of life are the bread and water of death. Adapa of course refuses them, and thereby ironically refuses life in favour of death. When Adapa, thus humiliated, obtains insight into his finiteness, it is too late: "As Adapa from the horizon of heaven to the zenith of heaven cast a glance, he saw its awesomeness"—but this insight does not prevent the punishment for his "lord-like behaviour."

Adapa's punishment involves an aspect of controlled ambiguity: it removes the disease which he has cast on the city. This does not conceal the real tragedy of this "model of men": the separative power of his knowledge is as finite as man himself—it is intermingled with confusion and falsehood, because truth exceeds man's powers. When this is the case, a final ordering of the cosmos is beyond man's power: there is no possibility to separate pure order from impure power.

Adapa's tragic insight, comparable to that of Gilgamesh, is without any illusion or hope of harmony. It coolly records man's ambiguous and paradoxical place in the cosmos, without optimistic overtones, and without pessimistic undertones. We agree with Frankfort et al. when they speak of a jeering ending, in which an inner turmoil is left to rage on, without an answer to the fundamental questions which have been raised (BP 227). We are convinced that in this tragic insight the human condition is laid bare.

CHAPTER FOUR

ASPECTS OF ANCIENT GREEK COSMOLOGY

4.1. Building materials of ancient Greek cosmology

In ancient Greece, the interconnected nature of boundaries could be seen everywhere. For example, the physical boundaries of a holy place, a *temenos*, separated the sacred from the profane (Burkert GR 86), and the separation extended to people who were or were not allowed to enter: only the pure were allowed to cross such boundaries.¹ By transformation, the boundary between life and death was involved as well: those who had come into contact with childbirth or with a death bed were barred from these holy places (Parker M 66). Those boundaries also served to distinguish man from animals; only the latter give birth, mate and die in sacred precincts. The separation between holy spaces and profane ones was also a separation between gods and man, but for the Greeks this separation was not absolute. Holy places did not only serve to emphasize the differences between mortals and immortals, but also allowed man to approach his gods. The human sphere and the divine one remained connected in various ways.

The rigidity of the demarcations in Greek cosmology resulted in its being haunted by marginals who could not be accommodated in the strict system of categories. One example may suffice. Hesiod was baffled by feminine nature. In his eyes, women were not ordinary human beings (i.e. men). They were able to speak like men (Op 61), but their faces were like those of goddesses (Op 62-63), whereas their way of thinking was like that of dogs (Op 67). Their use of language was feared by Hesiod: he was convinced that they lied and cajoled (Op 78). Though generally the Greeks accepted feminine marginality, some states felt obliged to check the power of women by a special magistracy, the 'women-controllers' (Parker M 101); in a similar vein the metics, Greece's migrant workers, were feared when they wormed themselves into the city (Parker M 262-63).

Being interconnected, Greek cosmology was often unable to accept marginality. It was readily condemned as a transgression. The fear of

¹ "We ourselves fix boundaries (ὄρους) to the sanctuaries and precincts of the gods, so that nobody may cross them (ὑπερβαίνειν) unless he be pure; and when we enter we sprinkle ourselves not as defiling ourselves thereby, but to wash away any pollution we may have already contracted" (Hippocr Morb Sacr 1, Littré 6.364).

overstepping existing cosmological boundaries is clear from the frequent use of images like 'stepping over a line' and 'trampling underfoot' in all major cosmological categories.² Like other people with interconnected cosmologies, the Greeks feared fundamental transgressions as *pollutions*, i.e. as the mixing of what should remain separate: the verb *φύρω* means both 'to mix' and 'to pollute' (Il 24.162, Pind N 1.68, Aes Ag 731, Eur El 1173). In the same vein Herodotus calls the temple burner Xerxes one "who made the sacred (*ἱερά*) and the profane (*ἴδια*) alike (*ἐν ὁμοίῳ*)" (8.109). That pollution was a cosmological and not primarily a physiological phenomenon is confirmed by the fact that it concerned transgressions in all six cosmological categories.³

We encounter all three major interconnected characteristics of pollution in Greek cosmology. To begin with, pollution was not just dirt, but exposure to dangerous power as a result of overstepping a cosmological boundary. For example, in Greek cosmology killing on the battlefield did not involve serious danger of pollution, but kinslaying did (Parker M 113, 123). The social distinction between friend and enemy determined the degree of contamination, according to the famous maxim: "Help your friends and hate your enemies" (e.g. Thgn 869-72). Next, pollution was contagious. What was polluted was polluting as well, spreading as it did across various categories. As Antiphon said of a murderer:

It is against your interests to allow this polluted man to enter divine precincts and pollute their sanctity, or pass on his contamination to the in-

² Homer calls the breaking of a solemn oath a transgression (*ὑπερβασία* – Il 3.107). The same is said of social offences (Il 16.17-18, Od 3.206, 22.168) and of lack of insight (*ὄτε κέν τις ὑπερβήη καὶ ἀμάρτη* – Il 9.501). Hesiod connects transgressions (*παραβασίας*) with the distinction between good and bad (Th 220). The verb 'to transgress' (*παραβαίνειν*) was commonly used for the breaking of laws (e.g. Meiggs/Lewis SGI 13.15).

In the ubiquitous fear of hubris, the abhorrence of disturbances of the order is condensed, again in all major categories. It should be emphasized that, as an interconnected phenomenon, hubris is not confined to human beings. It concerns everything that transgresses its boundaries: it may be applied to an overflowing river (*ὑπερβάλλουσαν* – Aes Pr 717-22), to plants (Michelini HP *passim*), animals (e.g. Hdt 1.189) and cities (Gernet RPG 401). Hubris may denote an intrusion into the domain of the gods (Aes Sept 502, Soph OC 120, Eur Suppl 630), violation of the honour of a friend (Il 1.203, 214), incest (Eur Hipp 1072) or an infringement of the boundary between life and death in the refusal to bury a corpse (Soph Aj 1092).

³ Nature/culture: diseases as intrusions of nature into culture soil the body (Soph Ph 758-60, cf. Parker M 217, 248). Man/gods: cf. Parker M 257. Social relations: traitors and law-breakers are contaminated (Ar Ach 182, Eq 239, Dem 25.28, 35.26), and Hesiod fears the contamination of the domestic hearth by sexuality—it should not be approached with pubes bespattered with seed (Op 733-34, cf. Hipponax Fr 104.20W). Life/death: Hesiod warns against the polluting confusion of death and procreation (Op 735-36). Justice: in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, Athena warns the citizens that the mingling of evil with the law may cause a pollution (Eum 693-95). Insight: evil words spoken on a joyous occasion involve a contamination (Aes Ag 636-37), just like evil thoughts do (Parker M 146).

nocent by eating at the same table with them. This is the kind of thing that causes crops to fail. (Tetr 1.α.10)

The effect of pollution is that the whole cosmos totters. Criminal pollutions were believed to cause plague, famine, and subsequently death and barrenness of women (Hes Op 240-45). Pollutions involved the divine sphere as well, and were therefore considered divine punishments, afflicting both perpetrator and victim (e.g. in cases of murder).⁴ In so far as hubris was considered a pollution (Parker M 5N), it shared its contagiousness: "Old hubris loves to bring forth a young hubris in the evils of men" (Aes Ag 765-67). Thirdly, though the Greeks meticulously distinguished intentional acts from unintentional ones (cf. Gernet RPG 349ff.), in the case of pollution this distinction was not decisive, as was explicitly stated by the prosecutor in Antiphon's *Tetralogies*: "I do not accuse the man of having killed voluntarily (ἐχόντα), but involuntarily (ἄχοντα). Yet in my opinion the involuntary killer causes no less harm than the voluntary one" (Tetr 2.α.1-2). This explains why animals and inanimate objects which had caused a lethal casualty were brought to trial and expelled if found guilty (Parker M 117). The most famous literary example of an involuntary pollution is that of Oedipus. But there are more instances: Theseus killed his cousins in self-defence, for example, but despite this disculpation he had to go into exile, "fleeing the contamination of the blood of Pallas' sons" (Eur Hipp 35; cf. Barret EH 162-63).

Purification being the counterpart of pollution, in ancient Greece it was not primarily a matter of hygiene, but of separation where cosmological categories had become confused. Small wonder, then, that Plato described purification as "a science of division (διάκρισις)" (Sph 226d). The five forms of separation in interconnected cosmology that we distinguished in the preceding chapter are encountered again:

To begin with, separative purifications were ubiquitous in ancient Greece. We will confine ourselves to two examples. One mode of non-ritual separation was the spitting out of a pollution, for example after the polluting encounter with a madman or an epileptic (Parker M 219). A good cultic example of purification occurred after the sacrifice of a calf

⁴ "The same word (prostropaios) can be used of the polluted killer himself, of the victim's polluting blood, and of the victim himself in his anger, or his avenging spirits; palamnaios is applied to the killer, the demons that attack him, and the (demonic) pollution that radiates from him; words like miastoor, alastoor, and aliterios work in very similar ways. The killer is prostropaaios, but so is the victim; the killer, a palamnaios himself, is also attacked by, and emanates, supernatural palamnaioi. The unifying factor is the polluting act, which sets up a chain of abnormal relations[...]" (Parker M 108-09).

to Dionysus on Tenedos: the participants showered the sacrificer with stones "in order to remove the stain from themselves" (Ael Nat an 12.34, cf. Burkert HN 165).

A second mode of separation was the expulsion of the polluter, an attempt to reverse the contamination. In this context the banishment of murderers and temple desecrators was described as "driving out the pollution (ἀγῆλατειν)" (Hdt 5.72, Soph OT 402, Arist Ath 20.3). Expulsion was not confined to human beings: diseases could be transferred to *pharmaka* which were sent to nature (the earth, the sea, or the mountains) (Hippocr Morb Sacr 1, Littré 6.362). Again it is clear that purification is a procedure of separation.

Like all interconnected cosmologies the Greeks had to employ substitution in order to avert the never-ending destructive effects of pollution and counterpollution. In a case of homicide, for example, a pig or a lamb was slaughtered in order to free the murderer from the talion of vengeance (Guépin TP 160-62). Parker has raised two objections to the idea that substitution played a role in this Greek sacrifice. First, he maintains that the meaning of the sacrifice does not consist of substitution but of the production of blood for the purpose of purification. Secondly, he considers a cheap animal a poor replacement for a human life (Parker M 372). These objections are not valid, however. First of all, if a pig's blood is to purify human hands it must be presupposed that the pig can somehow stand for the man - otherwise there would be no question of purification at all. Secondly, the fact that substitutes are less important than what they stand for is the very basis of substitution, as we argued in the preceding chapter. Our thesis is confirmed by a double substitution in one of Plato's laws. Plato decries that the state's magistrates must accompany the corpse of an executed kinslayer to the boundaries of the state, whereupon each magistrate has to throw a stone at the head of the killer "in order to purify the city" (Leg 9.873b). Evidently, kinslaying contaminates the whole city, and in order to purify it, both the corpse of the killer and the magistrates serve as its substitutes. The magistrates bear the city's pollutions and by means of the stoning transfer them to the body, the second substitute, which is thrown over the border without funerary rites. Only substitution makes sense of the notion that this separation should serve to purify the whole city.

The procedures of expulsion and substitution were combined into a fourth form of separation: the banishment of royal scapegoats. Greek mythology is crowded with them, especially when it is noted that there is a strong resemblance between the expulsion of a king, his self-oblation, and the sacrificing of his son or daughter (Versnel SCG 139f., Parker M 259). In ordinary Greek life, kings themselves were not selected as

scapegoats, but another substitute was executed or expelled, from the lower strata of society (Bremmer SRG 304-05; Parker M 258) or from the animal kingdom (Plut Quaest Gr 297b/c, 294a; cf. Burkert SHM 65-66).

It remains a matter of debate to what extent substitution played a role in the fifth type of separation, Greek practice as regards sacrifice (Vernant TSM 6ff. contra Burkert GR 65). A famous example is the story of Iphigeneia who was about to be sacrificed to Artemis but who, according to the *Cypria*, was at the last moment saved by the goddess, who presented the sacrificers with a substitute, a hind (Henrichs HSR 198ff.). In myth and tragedy we are also confronted with the perverted ritual of sacrifices in which human beings are killed instead of their animal substitutes (Burkert HN 21, Henrichs HSR 214). Aeschylus' Iphigeneia, for example, dies "like a goat above the altar" (Ag 232; note the previous identification of Agamemnon and Menelaus with two murderous eagles - Ag 114ff.).

Despite all efforts at separation and purification, ambiguity plays a predominant role in Greek cosmology. This should be understood in the context of the relationship between order and power. In Greek eyes the cosmos is not only the order of sharply distinguished entities, it is a battlefield of conflicting forces. Each entity has its limits, but also possesses the power to transcend them, thereby coming into conflict both with other entities and with its own boundaries. Not only man, but also the sun is prone to overstep the mark (Heraclitus DK B 49). The same is true of meteorological phenomena like heat (Aes Eum 941), and the divine world reflects sublunary agitation and conflict (Lloyd-Jones JZ 160). In this torn and agitated cosmos, entities can solely maintain themselves if they do not only keep within their limits, but also exert power. Over a shifting reality, elusive because of its continuing metamorphoses, victory can only be gained through an excess of mobility, an even greater power of agitation (Detienne/Vernant RI 28). The fundamental problem is that, though indispensable, this excess of power at the same time threatens the existence of entities in so far as it breaks through their boundaries, and that the conflict between limitation and power which both underlies and destroys entities is insoluble. This conflict is exemplified in the concept of hubris, applicable to both nature and man. The excesses of hubris jeopardize life, because they overstep the set boundaries, but at the same time they are indispensable to life.

The positive aspect of hubris cannot be separated from the negative one. As Solon states, every human undertaking is a venture, a risky enterprise (κίνδυνος), meaning that nobody knows its boundaries; once started, nobody knows where the venture will end (Solon Fr 13.65-66W).

For example, in earning money no limit (τέρμα) of riches is set (13.71W), human beings being intrinsically insatiable. In order to make money, the power of greed is indispensable, but because it exceeds all boundaries, ruin is inevitable.

Like all entities, man has to be extremely versatile in order to sustain his existence; he always has to be on the look-out for ways (πόροι) to overcome obstacles (ἀπορίαι). Models of man are Odysseus, who never lacked expedients (Detienne/Vernant RI 25) and Prometheus, characterized by his quick intelligence (Hes Th 511, 521, 616). Man's problem is to overcome his inability to separate indispensable daring and passion from excess and transgression.

This conflict between indispensable and destructive power is seen in a number of ambiguous Greek words.⁵ A good example is the word δεινός. This word points to overwhelming power as well as dreadful transgression in an inextricable confusion.⁶ For example, in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* the Erinyes are horrible transgressing monsters, yet indispensable to the welfare of the city. Athena counsels the citizens to expel such awesomeness (τὸ δεινόν) from the city, but not altogether (Aes Eum 698).

Because of their interconnected cosmology, the Greeks were thoroughly familiar with controlled ambiguity, i.e. procedures in which transgressions are condoned and encouraged under specifically delimited ritual circumstances, in order to come into contact with power and separate its beneficial aspects from the destructive ones. Again we have to take issue with Parker, who maintains: "A Greek would be puzzled by the suggestion that there is anything impure about the sacred, or vice versa" (M 11). Parker himself adduces examples which prove the opposite. A good one may be found in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (448-50, cf. Eur IT 1223ff.): "It is the law that he who is defiled by shedding blood shall be debarred from all speech until the blood of a suckling victim shall have contaminated (καθαίμαξωσι) him by the ministrations of one empowered to purify from murder", confronting us with a clear-cut purificatory use of pollution. Parker himself shows that no Greek would be puzzled by this ambiguity when he describes this episode as a "sanctification of pollution," adding that here the "source of power" is the

⁵ θράσος (courage and overboldness), θυμός (passionate spirit and evil temper), μένος (strength and fierceness), ὀργή (temperament and wrath), τόλμα (courage and recklessness).

⁶ In Hdt 9.3 Mardonius' awesome (δεινός) wish to capture Athens is believed to derive from his inborn arrogance. In Homer the war cry of the goddess Eris is both a great power and terrible (Il 11.10-11, cf. Aes Ch 634, Thuc 1.122). What is dreadful to one person (Hdt 7.157) is awesome power to someone else (Hdt 1.155; cf. Od 8.22, Il 7.245). In δεινός the positive meaning of "marvelous" and "clever" may be foremost as well (Hdt 3.152, 5.23).

contact with polluted blood “in a controlled ritual” (M 373). The same is true of the ambiguous powers of bodily wastes, marginal plants (M 231-33) and *pharmaka*, substances which are both poisons and healing drugs, described by Parker as deriving from “an original undifferentiated concept of *pharmaka* as forces operating invisibly for good or evil” (M 222N). That this ambiguity was not lost to classical Greece is proved in Sophocles’ *Trachiniae*, where the centaur Nessus calls his blood a φάρμακον (Tr 685). Deianeira believed that the *pharmakon* was a love-potion, but it turned out to be a deadly poison.

What is true of *pharmaka* also applies to *pharmakoi*, the Greek scapegoats. It was due to their extreme power that they were able to bear the pollutions of the whole community and cosmos and take them away on their defiled backs (Gernet RPG 255). But the power transforming them into absolute pollutions is the same power which made them the saviours of the city and the cosmos (Burkert GR 84). In this context it is understandable that Euripides should call Creon’s son Menoeceus, who died on behalf of Thebes, a *pharmakon* of salvation (φάρμακον σωτηρίας) (Phoen 893). The gap which separated the tragedians from philosophers like Heraclitus is seen in the phenomenon of controlled ambiguity. This is vehemently rejected by Heraclitus: “Vainly they purify (καθαίρονται) themselves with blood when they are polluted by blood (αἵματι μαινόμενοι), as if a man who had stepped into mud were to wash himself with mud” (DK B 5). Here Heraclitus has made a decisive step towards separateness— a step which undermines the core of tragedy.

The impossibility of controlling ambiguous power in Greek cosmology, resulting in tragic ambiguity, may be illustrated by the tragically ambiguous position of Achilles in the *Iliad*. He has to employ his excessive power to defend his honour against Agamemnon, but by his awesome defence of the warrior code he inevitably undermines that same code (Vernant MC 46), without any boundary between upholding the ethics of heroism and undermining them. Patroclus sums up Achilles’ tragically ambiguous position in the word αἰναρέτη (Il 16.31), which Aristarchus of Samothrace explained as “possessing excellence in evil,” and in tragedy such paradoxes are common when tragic ambiguity is rendered.⁷ Small wonder that the *Iliad* should emphasize Achilles’ *deinotes* (Il 11.654), and that δεινός is one of Sophocles’ favourite words to describe his heroes (Knox HT 23-24).

It is true that tragedy often presents us with examples of transgressions which are extremely rare in everyday life, e.g. a patricidal and incestuous

⁷ Aeschylus for example, speaks of an action being “greater than rightful” (μείζον ἢ δικαίως – Ag 376), and “above the best” (ὑπὲρ τὸ βέλτιστον – Ag 378). He maintains that “too strikingly doing well is heavy” (τὸ δ’ ὑπερκόπως κλύειν εὖ βαρὺ – Ag 468-69).

king (Parker M 308), but it is in such extremes that the foundations of a cosmology are seen. What tragedy shows in its exceptional episodes is that it may be impossible to do what all Greeks wanted to do: to separate the sacred from the impure and the profane (Cyrene Cathartic Law A 10; cf. Parker M 335). One example may suffice. Orestes' matricide was an inevitable and just act, prompted by a god (Aes Ch 268ff.) and by the avenging spirits of his father Agamemnon. Nevertheless, this purificatory act (Ch 283-84) is at the same time a new pollution, which in its turn demands purificatory revenge. Orestes' position is tragically ambiguous: it is impossible to distinguish between his purificatory power and his defiling power.

The tragic juxtaposition of the sacred and the impure is also seen in the Greek language, for example in the famous doublet ἄγρος/ἄρνός (pollution/pure, sacred) (Gernet RPG 37-38, Vernant MSG 136). Even without etymological kinship the words were felt to belong together (Burkert GR 270-71), so that ἄγρος is also used for expiatory offerings (Soph Fr 689R), and ἄρνός also refers to the 'untouchable' (Parker M 148, Burkert GR 271).⁸

4.2. Man and nature

Being interconnected, for Greek cosmology it was difficult to reconcile opposite demands where relations between man and nature were at stake. On the one hand man's civilization had to be kept free of all intrusions of wild and polluting nature, on the other hand nature was conceived of as part of an interconnected cosmos, implying that nature can neither be separated from the divine sphere nor from the human one. Men and gods can only maintain themselves thanks to their continuous possession by natural powers. The power of erotic attraction, for example, unites plants, animals, men and gods (Hom Hym Aphr 5.2-5, Eur Hipp 1-8, Aes Fr 44R). Conversely, nature cannot be reduced to pollution; at the same time it is a divine power which should be worshipped - for example, the earth as the goddess Ge or Gaia. Nature's divineness and interconnectedness with human behaviour explains the conviction that the impiety of high-placed persons could cause bad weather (Parker M 265) and the abundance of literary examples of storms sent by the gods in response to human arrogance (e.g. Il 16.384ff., Od 12.400ff.,

⁸ The same ambiguity characterizes ἑξάγιστος (Soph OC 1526, Dem 25.93, Aeschin 3.113), ἐναγής and ἐναγίζω, which Burkert translates: "to make taboo" (HN 9N, GR 271). Cratinus employed ἄγιος (holy) in the sense of "defiled" (Fr 402 K.-A.; Parker M 328).

Aes Ag 649ff.). Nature has to be expelled from human civilization, but such is impossible at the same time.

The interconnectedness between the natural and the divine distinguished ordinary Greek cosmology from the separatism of certain philosophers. Philosophers tended to strip nature of its divine character, as may be seen in Aristophanes' sarcasm in *The Clouds*. The pious Strepsiades asks Socrates, the foremost of the Sophists, "whether it is not Zeus who makes the clouds move?" "Not at all," answers Socrates, "it is the celestial vortex." Strepsiades then retorts in interconnected vein: "Vortex? I had missed this altogether - that Zeus no longer exists but in his place Vortex is king" (Nu 379-81). The tragedians have a similar attitude. To them, as to ordinary Greeks, Zeus was present in thunderstorms and rain (Burkert GR 126).

Like other interconnected cosmologies, the Greeks clearly separated civilized, inhabited space from the wilderness and the mountains which form the foreign and hostile space of the *ἀγρός* (Vernant MPG I.162, cf. Soph OT 112). The Greeks also meticulously separated themselves from the abhorred animal world. Man should not be like animals, whose essential characteristic is that they do not recognize boundaries: animals give birth, mate and die in sacred precincts (Parker M 326), they commit cannibalism and have no justice (Hes Op 276-79), they do not sacrifice and have no restrictions on violence (Epicurus Sent 32) (cf. Vernant MSG 192). Abhorrence of this animal lack of boundaries did not prevent the Greeks from making distinctions between animals. In accordance with the cosmic distinction between earth, sky and water, the animals were divided into land animals, birds and fish (e.g. Hom Hymn Aphr 5.4-5, cf. Hes Op 277); land animals were further divided according to their degree of acculturation. Only domestic animals were sacrificed in order to be consumed; wild animals were only sacrificed to wild gods (Guépin TP 161).

With domestic animals we return to interconnectedness: though these animals belong to civilized space, some of them remain wild. Horses, for example, are civilized by the bit and the rein, but they remain dangerously prone to transgressions as in the case of Diomedes who was devoured by his horses (cf. Detienne/Vernant RI 181, 185). Another inevitable intrusion of the animal world into the human one is the consumption of meat. Even if an animal had been sacrificed according to the established rites, its flesh remained an intrusion of untamedness into culture. Raw meat was considered a pollution which could only be removed by the civilizing procedure of roasting or cooking. As Plutarch says of raw meat:

For neither is it a living creature nor has it yet become cooked food. Now boiling and roasting, being a sort of alteration and mutation, eliminates the previous form; but fresh raw meat does not have a clean and unsullied appearance, but one that is repulsive like a fresh wound. (Quaest Rom 109.289e/f)

No wonder that omophagy was considered an inhuman, polluted deed (Porphyr De Abst. 1.13).

Interconnectedness between man and nature is complete when we realize that both human transgressions and human power are natural phenomena. Here we moderns have to be extremely cautious not to ascribe our separative thinking to the Greeks. The Greeks often linked human transgressions with natural phenomena, for example in associating domestic treachery, i.e. the treachery of women, with the behaviour of a viper (Aes Ch 249, Eur Andr 271, Ion 1262, cf. Arist Mirab 165), or the madness of man with horses which, no longer controlled by rein or bit, throw their masters out of the race track (e.g. Aes Pr 883, Ch 1022-24, Eur Ba 853), but these associations differ radically from modern separative poetic comparisons and images. Modern nature has been *entzaubert* by rational separation. Poets try to revive the cosmos by means of anthropomorphic metaphors and comparisons: to them, a viper or a wild horse are man-like phenomena. In Greek interconnected cosmology it was the other way round: nature was primary and man was connected with it in a physiomorphic way (cf. Austin ADM 116). Greek connections between nature and man were not comparisons, symbols or metaphors: to the Greeks, there was no 'literal' reality which could subsequently be enriched by symbols. Interconnectedness implies that the human sphere and the natural one are really connected in ever expanding transformations (cf. ADM 117-18). A treacherous woman is not compared to a viper, she is possessed by the natural power of a viper. The blood on Oedipus' hands is not like a winter storm—it unchains the real power of a storm within the city (Soph OT 101).

This interconnectedness is not confined to the sphere of transgressions. In some human actions the natural and the civilized are really fused, and not only by comparison. This is evident in marriage, a civilized institution which nevertheless sorely needs the elemental power of lust (Detienne JA 120, Friedrich MA 84-85). To the Greeks it was not a comparison but real interconnectedness if they called a fertile woman an arable field and her husband a ploughman (Gould LCM 53, Soph Tr 32-33). The genuine interconnectedness between man and nature makes their relationship ambiguous. Man has to expel natural power from civilization, but also needs this power to uphold it. If civilized life succeeds in expelling power it is threatened by weakness (aridity). This may

be illustrated by the function of the goddess Athena as the virginal representative of civilization. Without outside support she would become powerless (cf. Burkert GR 141, 143); therefore every year two maidens—the Arrephoroi who were consecrated to her cult—were sent down to the temple of the wild gods Aphrodite and Eros at the foot of the Acropolis in order to acquire “something” (Paus 1.27.3). According to one interpretation (which has not found universal acclaim) this rite gave power to the Athenian olive crop, to human seed and to the whole polis, as represented by the sacred olive tree (Simon FA 46).

In this context it is understandable that, under strict ritual control, polluted contacts with nature were allowed which would normally inspire horror. For example, in the cult of Dionysus women left the domestic hearth to dance in the wild mountains. During this ambiguous rite—both a transgression and a holy purification (δόσις καθαρμοῖσιν – Eur Ba 77)—omophagy was allowed, though not in the mythological, exaggerated form of tearing apart wild animals (Versnel PD 25, Bremmer GMR 275). When Euripides maintains that this ambiguity leads to holiness (Fr 472N2), we may presume that he is referring to the reintroduction of untamed power into civilization along ritual channels.

The interconnectedness of nature and civilization becomes tragically ambiguous when we are confronted with the power of tragic heroes. In the *Iliad*, when Achilles defended his honour he had to employ his “proud spirit,” but this implied that at the same time he was “savage” (ἄγριον) (Il 9.629). To indicate this ambiguous power of tragic heroes the adjective ‘raw’ (ὠμός) is employed, both in the sense of ‘transgressing’ (Aes Ag 1045) and of ‘extremely powerful’ (Soph Aj 548, cf. 205). A hero like Heracles is a typical culture founder. He killed monsters and introduced the Olympic Games. But at the same time he was bestial as well: he was covered with a lion’s hide, bore a bludgeon, killed his kinsmen, and was unbridled in his sexual lust. This passionate, animal lust eventually caused his death. No wonder that Kirk compares him to the Mesopotamian friends Gilgamesh and Enkidu (NM 206).

4.3 The Greeks and their gods

The Greek religion of the archaic and classical period shares the fundamental characteristics of interconnected religions: it is not personal but ritual (Burkert GR 275), while the gods are not transcendent but directly involved in natural and social processes (Lloyd-Jones JZ 160). Every home had its *sanctum*, every city its divine protector. Burial rites were as sacred as the laws of the city. Even poetic inspiration was of a divine nature (cf. Muir RE 194-95).

Greek gods were at an immense distance from mortals and at the same time dangerously close (Vernant MSG 118). Primarily, man had to draw firm boundaries between himself and the divine sphere, otherwise self-deification and ruin were the upshot. The separation between gods and men comprised the most important categories, like knowledge/opinions, immortality/mortality, permissiveness/regulated sex, etc. (Burkert GR 183, Vernant MSG 191). In the rituals through which the Greeks sought contact with their gods their separation was particularly emphasized. Men ate the flesh which is perishable like their nature, whereas the gods received the incorruptible substances (bones) which reflected their eternal existence (Detienne in Gordon MRS 217-18). The smoke of sacrifice rose to heaven, whereas the human part remained on earth.

Once more, the problem is man's inability to separate himself completely from the divine realm. He is not only connected with nature, but with the gods as well. This is emphasized by Pindar:

One is the race of men, one is the race of the gods, but from one mother (Earth) do we both draw our breath. Yet a power wholly sundered holds us aloof, in that the one is a thing of naught, while for the other the brazen heaven abides as a sure abode forever. Nevertheless we have some likeness, either in power of mind (μέγαν νόον) or in nature (φύσιν) to the immortals. (N 6.1-5)

Man's proximity to the gods endowed him with his expansive power, but this power inevitably turns into hubris, because man's finite nature is unable to bear such an excess of force. Therefore Apollo's warning to Diomedes in the *Iliad* was both necessary and without avail: "Bethink thee, son of Tydeus, and yield, and do not think to be the equal of the gods, for never shall the race of immortal gods be the same as that of men who walk the earth" (Il 5.440-43). Sophoclean heroes are characterized by the same unbearable divine power which makes them both god-like and untamed animals (cf. Knox HT 42-44).

Tragic heroes are like gods (ἰσόθεος - e.g. Il 2.565, Od 1.324, Eur IA 626), in that they represent the community in prosperity and adversity. But their power is dreadful as well if it leads to transgressions threatening the state, as happened with Oedipus. In that particular case the city could only maintain its order by exorcizing the source of danger, which was also its very foundation. Because this expulsion was at the same time a self-expulsion and a self-sacrifice, after his death the state tried to reintroduce the heroic outcast to serve as a source of beneficial power. This happened more than once, both in reality and in tragedy: for example, Cimon was praised for bringing Theseus' bones to Athens in 475 (Richardson VLD 56), while the Spartans were convinced that Orestes' bones gave them success in battle (Hdt 1.67-68). Similarly, in Sophocles'

Oedipus Coloneus Oedipus claims that his secret grave in Colonus will be of more avail to Athens than many shields and mercenaries (OC 1518-25). It should be emphasized that the creation of heroes is dependent upon power, not upon moral qualities. Kleomedes, for example, who had killed a whole school of children, was made a hero (Bremmer CS 107). A powerful enemy of the state could become its protector after death, e.g. Cimon in Cition (Plut Cim 19.5), Eurystheus in Athens (Eur Heraclid 1024-43). Even a corpse could become the focus of a heroic cult: sometimes plagues and other disasters were ascribed to the wrath of a dead man; once a seer had spotted the source of contamination and the corpse's anger had been ritually appeased, the corpse was believed to have a beneficial influence, in making the fields fertile, the sick healthy, etc. (Burkert GR 206-07).

But the cults of the heroes were a poor protection against the dangers of the tragically ambiguous relationship between man and the gods. The fundamental problem is that in a sense all human beings are like tragic heroes: all had to employ divine power in order to sustain themselves—meaning that they all intruded upon the domain of the gods. This inevitably incited divine jealousy. The gods did not only punish excessive evil, but excessive goodness as well: they punished all that was god-like. As Theognis expresses it:

Often a man is eager of virtue (ἀρετήν), pursuing gain, only to be misled into great error by a kindly disposed daemon, who has the custom to make what is evil seem good to him, and what is good seem evil. (Thgn 402-06, cf. Solon in Hdt 1.32 and Il 19.270-74)

A structural approach to the Greek pantheon is particularly apt, because like the Mesopotamian gods, the Greek gods are not clear-cut individuals but focuses of divergent cosmological oppositions. As such they are comparable to language elements as studied by structuralism (cf. Vernant MSG 106). On the one hand the gods only exist as oppositions to each other, Hestia and Hermes for example deriving their identity from their opposition in categories like inside/outside, hearth/polis, immobility/movement (Vernant MPG I 124ff.). On the other hand, gods are accumulations of divergent, sometimes conflicting aspects. For example, Zeus protects royal power in his capacity of Zeus Basileus, while he protects the family as Zeus Herkeios (MSG 107-08). There is also a Zeus of the underworld and a Zeus who brings disorder to mortals. All gods have both light and dark aspects (Burkert GR 188). 'Father Zeus, no god is more destructive than you' is a theme which runs through the whole of Homeric poetry (e.g. Il 3.365, Od 20.201). The most important opposition is that between the Olympian and the chthonian (Burkert GR

202),⁹ which is also the opposition between heaven and the underworld, light and darkness, life and death, the public cult of the city and the private cult of the family, etc. As such Zeus is not only opposed to Hades, but as Zeus Olympios he is also opposed to himself as Zeus Chthonios (Vernant MSG 107, Burkert GR 200).

It is of the utmost importance to note that Greek gods do not only represent structural oppositions, but that which cannot be accounted for in structural order as well, i.e. transgression, pollution and ambiguity. There is a category of gods who represent disorder, and certain aspects of orderly gods represent disorder as well. Hecate, for example, is associated with impurity and honoured as such (Parker M 223-24). Apollo normally represents order—but there is also an Apollo Nomios who probably exemplifies the same amoral menace as does Pan: sudden terrors of the herds, the midday madness of men (Parker M 244-45).

The disorderly trio Dionysus, Ares and Aphrodite deserve special attention. They occupy positions in the interstices of the Olympian family (Burkert GR 218-19). The tragically ambiguous character of these gods comes to light when we realize that they represent disorderly power which on the one hand has to be expelled as a threat, but on the other hand is indispensable to support order. We shall concentrate on Aphrodite and Dionysus.

First of all we must emphasize that Aphrodite is akin to her Near Eastern counterparts Ishtar and Inanna (Burkert GR 152, Friedrich MA 14) in that her power is not confined to the area of sexual love, but is universal. With her consort Eros she also represents the passion for food, drink, song, dance and even condolence (Wickert-Micknat F 101). She is also connected with the destruction of war. Aeschylus connects Eros with the lust for vengeance (Ag 1478), while Sophocles speaks of Aphrodite's victory (Trach 497, cf. Easterling ST 134). Some cities worshipped an Aphrodite of war, Aphrodite Areia (Nilsson GGR I 490, cf. 487, 493). Aphrodite is primarily a power of destruction which should be shunned. Her power is seen in abductions, divorce, maledictions, murder, war and the destruction of the state (Wickert-Micknat F 100), yet it is indispensable. Marriage cannot be confined to Hera's realm—Aphrodite's passion is just as indispensable to it. Her power is also necessary to maintain the polis: in Athens she was worshipped, together with Peitho, as benefactress to the polis (Simon FA 50, cf. Buxton PT 33-34). This means that man's relationship with Aphrodite is impossible: he has to exorcize her power and to worship it at the same time. Both

⁹ The difference is emphasized, both in literature (e.g. Aes Supp 24f., Ag 89, Eur Hec 146, Isocr 5.117) and in cult (Graf MHW 217-18, Burkert GR 199).

may lead to destruction, as is seen in Euripides' *Hippolytus*. Phaedra delivers herself completely to the destructive goddess and has to pay the price of suicide, while Hippolytus, who resists Aphrodite's force, is also destroyed.

A similar ambiguous position is occupied by Dionysus. He leads people on to behave madly and to confuse cosmological categories. Often it is impossible to say whether his *mania* is a boon or a curse—it is a vehicle of indiscriminate power (Burkert GR 162). That the god was conceived of as a living paradox transpires from two fifth-century Orphic tablets (Henrichs LSS 235N): the words 'life/death/life,' 'peace/war' and 'truth/falsehood' appear next to his name. Dionysus' ambiguity is not fully revealed until we realize that he was not only worshipped in untamed nature, in defiance of the rules of the polis (Detienne in Gordon MRS 224), but also in the heart of the polis, for example during the festival of tragedies and comedies. Like Aphrodite, Dionysus represents power which has to be both abhorred and worshipped. This tragic situation is made clear in Euripides' *Bacchae*: Agave completely surrenders herself to the god and is punished by unwittingly slaying her son and being banished, while the opposite attitude of Pentheus, who resists the god, leads to his violent death.

4.4. Social relations

Like all interconnected cosmologies that of the Greeks was not focused on man's individuality, but on his position in a web of social relations. The basic unity was the family, the *oikos* (both the house and the household). The *oikos* could comprise the *anchisteis*, the bilateral kinsmen, extending to second cousins who had rights to intestate inheritance and, in the absence of brothers, to heiresses (Humphreys A 199).

That the interconnected unity of the extended family was the major focus of Greek cosmology is apparent from the nature of transgressions against it. It was dangerous for the whole family if one member connected himself by marriage with a family of polluters. For example, in Euripides' *Supplikes* Theseus reproaches Adrastus for mixing his pure house with contaminated families, i.e. those of Tydeus and Polyneices (Suppl 222-23). That the family's unity even extended through time is clear when we realize that children could be polluted by their fathers' crimes. In Sophocles' *Oedipus Coloneus*, for example, Antigone speaks of "the cursed blood that is ours from our father" (OC 1671-72). The clearest expression of this state of affairs is the Greek conception of killing a family member: this was considered a form of suicide (Parker M 123N). Conversely, suicide was conceived as a form of kin-killing.

In ancient Greece the family was a patriarchy. The head of the household was invested with great authority and had to be honoured and taken care of by his sons as long as he lived (Glotz SFD 31, Lacey FG 21). Women were minors all their lives and always lived under the guardianship of their husbands, fathers or sons. If a woman's father died before she was married, her male next-of-kin became her guardian (Pomeroy GWW 62, 74, 102).

A son should not offend his parents—that would be sacrilege and a pollution (Parker M 197) inviting divine sanctions (Il 9.456ff, Aes Eum 269ff.). In this context it is not surprising that patricide had to be immediately retaliated for (cf. Plato Leg 9.872e). According to Pindar, for example, the mutual slaying of Polyneices and Eteocles was a direct consequence of the patricide committed by their father Oedipus (Ol 2.38-42). That patricides were models of ambiguous power is not only clear from the case of Oedipus, and from the heroic patricides Telegonus and Althaemus (Parker M 378, 390), but also from the “power and might” (βίη καὶ χερός) with which Zeus had to overthrow his father (Hes Th 490) in order to establish the prevailing cosmological order.

In ancient Greece siblings had to be affectionate towards each other (Bremmer IUG 182). Aeschylus, for example, points out that the conflict between Eteocles and Polyneices was a fission where unity should reign. They stood as “brother to brother, enemy to enemy” (Sept 674-75). In the underworld Agamemnon deplored the strife between the two sisters belonging to his house, Electra and Chrysothemis (Soph El 1070f.). The irony is that this strife was unavoidable—it resulted from Electra's conception of her duty towards her family, her duty to please her dead father (e.g. El 399, 1075f.).

The most important task of the Greek interconnected family was its continuation through the generations. This was important both for the living members of the family and for the deceased ones—the latter could only survive through the honours paid to them by the living (Lacey FG 147). Therefore the most important task of women was to bear a legitimate heir (Pomeroy GWW 62, Calame CF I 454). The importance of this feminine task is clear from the gravity of the two transgressions against it. On the one hand there was an extreme fear of promiscuity (e.g. in the case of Helen of Troy); on the other hand extended spinsterhood was abhorred as well. The Greeks had no ideal of permanent chastity. On the contrary (Parker M 92), a spinster was a transgressor: she did not leave her family in order to join that of a husband, thereby obstructing interfamilial communication. Prolonged virginity was believed to be dangerous for the girl as well. According to the Hippocratic treatises nubile girls who postponed marriage too long developed

symptoms of hysteria (a deficiency connected with the uterus) which could result in 'longing for death' (King BB 115).

Being members of their parental family as well as of their husband's household, women often had to fulfil conflicting duties. Electra, for example, had to give all her attention to her brother Orestes, who thereby became a dangerous mixture of son, father and spouse to her (Vernant MPG I 138). A similar conflict characterizes the relationship between Oedipus and Antigone. This being a child's duty, Antigone had to support her father in his exile, but such consorting with her father implied a transgression against her feminine nature (Soph OC 1368). In Euripides' *Phoenissae* her wish to stay with Oedipus was the reason why Antigone refused to marry Haemon (Phoen 1678-79).

It is a well-known fact that in fifth-century Athens there was a noticeable tension between the family, with its old customs, and the polis, which had been reorganized by Cleisthenes (508B.C.), partly in order to curb the power of important families (Forrest RD 198). One of the battlegrounds was the family's prerogative of burial (Gernet DIG 224). Despite this smouldering conflict, the Greeks realized that both institutions were indispensable. The family remained a venerable institution with its own deities (Gernet/Boulanger GGR 247), while the state was indispensable in protecting the citizens against foreigners (who were often considered untamed and subhuman).

The king was seen as the city's highest substitute, not only in times of affliction, but in times of prosperity as well.

A god-fearing king, who ruling over a large and mighty people maintains straight justice, and the earth bears corn and barley, and the trees are weighed down with fruit, and the flocks give birth unfailingly, and the sea produces fish, because of his good rule, and the people prosper. (Od 19.109-14)

It is illuminating to contrast this quotation with the disastrous effects which Oedipus' misfortunes had on the city of Thebes (Soph OT 22-28).

Because of his ability to bring disaster as well as prosperity to the land, the very eminence of a king was considered perilous (Parker M 166). Also, conflicts could arise between the demands of his family and those of the community. For example, Agamemnon had to sacrifice his daughter Iphigeneia to enable Greece's leaders to reach Troy, and in Aeschylus' *Septem* Eteocles had to fight his own brother to save the city of Thebes.

4.5. Life and death

In ancient Greece man not only occupied a position between animals and gods, he also lived in the niches between life and death. Man's primary

status was that of a *brotos* and a *thnetos*, a mortal who had to combine the demands of life with those of death. That Greek life was permeated with death is clear from the duty to take care of deceased family members. If these rituals were omitted, dead fathers were literally bereft of their sons and their names (Isae 2.46). And one had to keep in mind one's own mortality as well. Whoever forgot his mortal nature was apt to think like an immortal, thereby, ironically, jeopardizing his life.

Again we are confronted with the conflicting demands of interconnected cosmology. On the one hand, mortals were induced to separate the domains of life and death because their mixture might cause pollutions. Hesiod, for example, warned: "Do not beget children on your return from a funeral where ill words were spoken, but after a festival of the immortal god" (Op 735-36). On the other hand, life and death had to be reconciled. Both neglect of life in favour of death and neglect of death in favour of life were considered cosmological transgressions. An example of the first transgression is seen in Sophocles' *Oedipus Coloneus*: "Who craves to live too long, neglecting just measure—it is clear to me that he lives in darkness" (OC 1211-14). In Sophoclean heroes the opposite transgression is more prominent. Their awesome power makes their conceptions more than mortal; their deeds bring them into contact with immortal power. But their human frailty is unable to bear this contact with power: they obtain the opposite of their intentions; they may even accept the consequence of death as the result of their immortal pretensions. In the context of this ambiguity Ajax is called a transgressor against mortality, being "intent on death" (Aj 812), even in "love with death" (Aj 967). In Euripides' *Phoenissae* Creon warns Antigone not to mar her chances of procreation (through her marriage with Haemon) by excessive lamentations for the dead (Phoen 1672). But Antigone's excessive power had already brought her into the realm of death, as "a Bacchante of corpses" (βάχχα νεκύων – Phoen 1489).

Killing in war was not polluting at all, or was easily purified (Aes Sept 679-80), whereas kinslaying, being a sort of suicide, caused a pollution which could not be wiped out. As Aeschylus says of the mutual killing of Polyneices and Eteocles: "Suicidal death (θάνατος...αὐτοκτόνος), dealt to each other by two men of the same blood—of that pollution (μιάσματος) there is no growing old" (681-82). This fear of pollution explains the precautions which were taken in cases where one family member had to execute the death penalty on another. The wrong-doer was driven out or else made to die by himself, e.g. by shutting him up to starve (Rose HM 85). Of course, this problem only cropped up when it was impossible to hand the kinsman over to the legal authorities. As far as we know, burial alive only occurs in myths about royal families. King Cercyon of Eleusis,

for example, adopted the practice in the execution of his adulterous daughter Alope.¹⁰ What he did not know was that Alope was no ordinary transgressor but an ambiguous character, whose adultery consisted of being raped by Poseidon. This god reaffirmed her ambiguous position by transforming her into a well.

Purifying rites such as that performed by King Cercyon were ambiguous, because violent death was counteracted by renewed violence. This counterviolence was, of course, heavily controlled by ritual. That such a violent answer to violence was playing with fire is clear from the dreadful sacrifices in the *Oresteia*. After Agamemnon, incited by the gods, had sacrificed Iphigeneia, a purification had to be performed. On Zeus' demand Clytaemnestra prepares a counter-sacrifice (Ag 1118, 1433, 1504)—a bath being used as the purificatory implement (Ag 1109). But the purification of Agamemnon's pollution could only succeed if it shared the same power. As a result another polluted perversion emerged: another human sacrifice, in a bath which had become a polluted blood-bath (δολοφόνου λέβητος – Ag 1129).

To the Greeks a corpse, being a marginal between life and death, was a source of pollution which extended to the family members of the deceased. Normally the pollution was easily removed by sending the body to Hades and the kinsmen back to normal life (Parker M 60-61). The pollution only became dangerous if these rites of separation were omitted—if the body was left unburied. This danger induced everybody who passed an unburied corpse to throw a handful of dust over it as a purification. Omission of this sacred ritual was threatened by a curse, annually proclaimed by the Bouzygean priests in Athens (Parker M 44).

Not all corpses were alike, however. Some were more polluted than others, for instance, those of suicides: whereas a normal deathbed was not defiled by the dying man, in a case of suicide by hanging the rope and branch were destroyed or thrown over the city boundaries (Parker M 41-42). According to Aeschines the hand of a suicide was buried apart (3.244), while Plato decreed that a suicide's body should be left on the state's boundaries without a name on its grave (Leg 9.873d). Other transgressors got an exceptional treatment as well: those who died before their time (having overstepped the boundary between life and death) were buried, not cremated (Bremmer CS 94). It is interesting that some people who thus ignominiously died before their time were later made heroes (Bremmer CS 105)—they seem to have been in possession of uncanny power.

¹⁰ The main source for the myth is Hyginus (Fab 187) whose account may go back to a tragedy by Euripides (Fr 105ffN2). See also Ar Av 559, Paus 1.39.3.

This brings us to an important rite of controlled ambiguity: the official practice of leaving the corpses of felons unburied. What under normal circumstances would have been a dreadful defilement now serves ritual ends, not, as Parker maintains, because the pollution of the criminals has faded away (Parker M 46), but because the undiminished power of their pollution is ritually controlled. It was not an accident that the practice of leaving a body unburied only applied to the foulest of men: murderers of father, mother, brother or children (Plato Leg 9.873b), temple robbers and traitors (in contrast to enemies) (Xen Hell 1.7.22; Thyc 1.138.6).

These customs explain why in the *Oedipus Coloneus* Oedipus is not allowed burial in his native soil: "the blood of a kinsman will not let thee (οὐκ ἔξ τοῦμφυλον αἵμά σ')'" (OC 407, cf. 600-01). In Euripides' *Phoenissae*, Creon refuses burial to Polyneices because he was not an ordinary enemy but an enemy from within the city, a traitor: "He was an enemy of the state, while being no enemy (πόλεως ἐχθρὸς ἦν, οὐκ ἐχθρὸς ὦν)" (Phoen 1652). In the same episode in Aeschylus' *Septem*, the ritual character of the act is emphasized when a herald declares that the whole Theban population decided to leave Polyneices unburied (1005ff.), not because the pollution had left him, but because he was extremely defiled: "Even in death (θανῶν) he will possess the vehement pollution (ἄγος) of his fatherland's gods, whom he held in dishonour by leading a foreign army against the city and besieging it" (1017-19).

Sometimes the corpse was thrown over the border (e.g. Phoen 1630), as some believe in order to enable the family to bury it outside the territory of the state (Parker M 46). But other ways of disposing of the body, like throwing it into the sea (Bremmer CS 90), excluded every possibility of burial (Parker M 47). In Athens certain criminals were thrown into a pit, the *barathron*, just outside the city walls, from which the corpses could not be recovered (Gernet DIG 182, 192, Höppener BSA 74, cf. Parker 47N). The ambiguity of the ritual comes to light in a story by Agathias (Hist. 2.31), in which seven Greek philosophers buried the corpse of a committer of incest. That night, however, one of the philosophers was thus admonished in his dream: "Do not bury the un-buriable; let him be prey to the dogs. Earth, mother of all, does not accept the mother-corrupting man." The next day they found the body uncovered, "as though the earth of her own accord had cast it up and refused to save it from being eaten," and even the philosophers were convinced that committers of incest should be left to be torn apart by dogs. And in the *Septem* the Theban people want Polyneices' body to be mangled by dogs and birds (1014, 1020); nobody is allowed to bury it, not even a kinsman (1024, cf. Phoen 778).

That the ritual use of the defilement of exposed corpses was extremely

dangerous is seen in the legend of the Athenians who stoned a priest of Cybele and threw his body into the *barathron*. It turned out that the priest was not a charlatan, and the Athenians were convinced that the fact that the priest was innocent, and that therefore the ritual had been perverted, was the main cause of a great outbreak of the bubonic plague (Nilsson GGR I 725N, Versnel PD 11). How striking the differences may be between an interconnected cosmology and rising separatism is clear from Heraclitus' remark that after death the body is "more fit to be cast out than dung" (DK B 96). For Heraclitus the power of polluted corpses has vanished.

4.6. Law and order

As in other interconnected cosmologies, to the Greeks justice was primarily a matter of order and balance (Gernet RPG 49,74) on a divine and cosmic scale. *Dike* was a goddess, the daughter of Zeus (Hes Op 256, Aes Sept 662), and his assessor (Soph OC 1382). In the word *dike* the ideas of law and order were combined (Lloyd-Jones JZ 4). Human laws were considered reflections of divine law. As a fourth century orator declared: "Every law is the invention and gift of the gods, as well as a decree by wise men" (Dem 25.16). Human sanctions against transgressions were regarded as "coming to the aid" of the gods (Parker M 165).

The law governing the whole universe was the *lex talionis*. Whoever acted had to expect to be paid back in his own coin—*δράσαντι παθεῖν* (Aes Ag 1430, 1564, Ch 313), both where merit was concerned (Hes Op 353-55, Soph Aj 522) and where offences were at stake. The hope which fed on the belief in the cosmic law of talion was that disasters could be explained by previous transgressions (Hdt 6.86), while there was the certainty that crime would always be punished in the end (Thgn 199-202). In an interconnected cosmology retribution could either overtake the criminal himself or his descendants (Hdt 1.91, Solon Fr 13.25-32W).

The tragic nature of the law of talion was felt in Greece no less than in the Near East. First, talion may operate on a cosmic scale, which from the point of view of the human individual may be grossly unjust. It is an ironic consolation that an innocent man should suffer for the deeds of his forebears (Thgn 731-36) and that evildoers should continue to thrive (Thgn 373-85). It is humanly impossible simultaneously to adopt the divine and the human perspective in the law of talion (Thgn 203-04). The fundamental problem of talion is that its retaliations in their turn have to be transgressions demanding more retaliation, and so on. The order of talion is violence. The Greeks had various rituals with which to control the dangers of unrestricted violence and counterviolence. A good

example is sacrificial killing, in which great efforts were made to prevent retaliation. For instance, measures were taken to ensure the willingness of the victim ('the comedy of innocence' – Burkert GTR 106).¹¹ In the *Bouphonia* the victim was even induced to commit an error for which it could be punished by death. Afterwards the sacrificial knife was condemned and thrown into the sea (Burkert HN 136f).

All these rituals could not overcome the fact that acting according to talion was also committing a transgression, and thereby potentially dangerous. This is abundantly confirmed by the inevitable mixture of purification and violence in the perverted rituals we encounter in the *Oresteia*. No wonder that in this trilogy Aeschylus should speak of "the grace which comes with violence" (Ag 182-83, cf. Pind Fr 169 Snell). What is true of the law of talion applies to cosmic order as a whole: it is based on violence (cf. Detienne/Vernant RI 99).

4.7. Darkness and insight

If there is one category in which all aspects of tragic ambiguity in Greek cosmology are condensed, it is that of insight. Again the fundamental *aporia* is that mortals are confronted with conflicting cosmological demands. On the one hand it is necessary to separate truth from falsehood. In particular when man has to take action, he must be cognizant of the boundary between good and evil. On the other hand, it is not only humanly impossible to distinguish knowledge sharply from mere opinion, it is also extremely dangerous. Being mortal, man should not infringe on the gods' prerogative of eternal insight.¹² He should keep truth and darkness mixed.

In order to maintain life, man constantly had to make separations, because the dangers of hubris lurked everywhere. Insight was the weapon against human recklessness (Thgn 1171-76). The separations man had to make in order to avoid transgressions were predominantly of a relative nature: the avoidance of hubris consisted of the avoidance of one-sidedness. Man had to do nothing overmuch, keep to the middle road (Thgn 219-20). Being mortal, man needs the changeable, adaptable nature of a polyp. He has to separate himself from rigidity in his opinion:

Turn, my heart, towards all friends a changefully coloured (ποικίλον) habit, mingling your temperament (όργήν) to be like unto each. Let your temperament be that of the convolvèd polyp, which takes the semblance of the rock he has converse with; now be guided this way, and then be of a different colour. Surely, skill (σοφίη) is better than unchangeableness. (Thgn 213-18)

¹¹ The god at Delphi said: "That which willingly nods the head at the washing of hands I say you may justly sacrifice" (Porphyr De Abst 2.9; cf. Burkert GR 56).

¹² For θνητά φρονεῖν see e.g. Aes Pers 820, Soph Aj 761, Eur Ba 395.

The major question is: what is the nature of human insight? It is clear that in interconnected cosmology the distinction between truth (ἀλήθεια) and opinions (τὸ δοκεῖν) was well-known (e.g. Simon. 598P), but contrary to separative philosophy Greek interconnected cosmology was convinced that through its very nature the domain of truth was inaccessible to mortals. Contrary to the gods man knows neither good nor evil (Mimn 2.4-5W). The gods possess truth, but are unwilling to share it with mortals: their truth is invisible to man (Solon Fr 17W); with his human mind, man is unable to search out the counsel of the gods (Hom Hymn Ap 3.192, Simon 61-62, Solon 13.63ff.W).

Here the tragic problem comes to the fore. Man has to separate his behaviour from hubris, but the power of insight, which should be the instrument of his separation, itself cannot be pure, otherwise man would still become 'hybrid'. This forms an insoluble dilemma: either man claims pure separative insight and becomes 'hybrid,' or he accepts the impurity of insight, but is unable to avoid recklessness. Small wonder that Solon should maintain: "It is most difficult to have insight into the invisible measure (μέτρον) of judgment, which yet alone holds the boundaries (πείρατα) of everything" (Fr 16W). The conclusion must be that it is humanly impossible not to fail. Only the gods are infallible, man can never be (Dem 18.290). All mortals are prone to err (Eur Hipp 615, Thyc 3.45.3). The tragic duality of human and divine knowledge is summed up in Theognis' remark that nobody who is active knows for sure (ἐν φρεσὶν εἰδώς) whether he is moving to a good end or a bad one. Man practises vain things, knowing nothing, whereas the gods accomplish everything according to their own mind (Thgn 133-42).

It is in this context of duality that the character of tragic heroes has to be understood. By means of their excessive power they strive for the purity of truth which is the prerogative of the gods (compare Oedipus' search for truth). The consequence is that they lack prudence. They are unable to restrain their temper (Soph El 1011). They are particularly unable to yield and be changeable like Theognis' polyp (e.g. Aj 371, El 396, 1014). Their claims to divine insight are beyond their human powers. Ironically, they are unable to learn (El 370, cf. 889). They go mad involuntarily, violating the measure of human thinking (Aes Sep 842, 875, Soph OT 550) and contracting defilements (Aes Ag 220, Eum 377-78, Soph OC 805).

Tragedy is not complete until we realize that someone who does his utmost to be prudent may nevertheless be led into transgression and insolence by demonic powers. This is what happened to Deianeira in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. Ironically, her immoderate erring was due to her longing for temperance (Reinhardt S 57). The tragic duality of im-

prudence *and* prudence is worked out in Sophocles' *Electra*. Chrysothemis admits that Electra has justice on her side, yet she has to condemn her sister's imprudence (El 338-39). Electra realizes that she is in an insoluble predicament. Either she is imprudent (φρονεῖν κακῶς) or she is prudent, but then she has to forfeit her friends (El 345-46, cf. 1027). Therefore Electra is convinced that not only her own imprudence is a tragic failure, but Chrysothemis' prudence as well. She calls it awesome (δεινόν) that her sister should err (ἐξαμαρτάνειν) despite her ability to speak well (El 1039).

Even with the opposition between the 'hybrid' and the moderate the structural possibilities of tragedy are not exhausted. There is another mirror image of the tragic hero: the seer. Whereas tragic heroes live in an excess of power and so go mad, seers live in an excess of divine insight, but pay the price of being powerless on the human level. According to the law of talion, seers had to atone for their divine insight, for example by being blind in the human world (Buxton BL 28-29). The tragedy of seers mirrors that of tragic heroes: they know the divine ordinances but are unable to communicate them to mortals. First Tiresias vainly tried to block Oedipus' search for truth, and when events had gone too far, he elected to remain silent. Against his wish Oedipus compelled him to speak—he knew that his words would be the instrument of the hero's downfall.¹³

The heroes' madness was only one side of the tragic coin. The other was that hubris did not only depend upon human transgression; the gods were involved as well: they jealously guarded the purity of their insight. For example, Apollo gave "unfailing advice (νημερτέα βουλήν)" to men through his oracle (Hom Hymn Ap 3.252), but to mortals this advice was not unfailing at all. The oracular Apollo was called Loxias, the Oblique (Burkert GR 148); his advice was "hard to understand (δυσμαθῆ)" (Aes Ag 1255). Like the Pale Fox of the Dogon, Apollo represented truth which was a confusion to mortals. But Apollo was not the only god to bring confusion to mortals. Deities like the Erinyes brought blindness and madness (Soph Fr 577R). The gods not only confounded voluntary transgressors— they were resentful of all human greatness: "The wise man errs and fame comes to the man without insight" (Thgn 665-66). As Lycurgus explained, referring to the old poets: "When the anger of the daemons is injuring a man, the first thing is that it takes the good

¹³ In Greece, as in other interconnected societies, people were convinced that a prophet did not only predict, but also made his prediction come true by uttering the words themselves. Thus Agamemnon accuses Calchas of never predicting anything good for him nor bringing anything good to pass (Il 1.106ff., cf. Linforth AC 239).

understanding out of his mind and turns him to the worse judgment, so that he may not be aware of his errors" (C. Leocratem 92, cf. Il 9.18, 19.90f., Od 15.234-35, Thgn 402ff.).

The inevitability of erring was not confined to tragic heroes - they exemplified human life in general. Man needs power to maintain himself in a conflicting universe, and this need for power prevents him from attaining the required prudence. Madness is an illness which should be cured by *iatroi logoi* (Aes Pr 378). But the tragic problem is that the cure is impotent in comparison to the power of temperament (*ὀργή* - Pr 315, 378, 977f). The temperament which is indispensable for upholding civilization inevitably generates "raw" words (*τραχεῖς.. λόγους* - Pr 311) bringing madness. In man's claim to insight this power, both indispensable and destructive, manifests itself as hope. Theognis explicitly connects hope with man's spirit of enterprise and calls both "demons which are hard to bear (*χαλεποὶ δαίμονες*)" (637-38). Hope is as necessary as it is dangerous. It is indispensable to action, but inevitably leads to the neglect of limits (Opstelten SGP 176). As such it is analogous to hubris (Thyc 2.62.5, 3.45.1, 5.103.2). Man's tragedy is that he cannot live without the delusion of hope. For example, hoping for life he has to forget death, otherwise he would be paralyzed by fear. As the *Prometheus* phrases it:

Prom: Yes, I caused mortals no longer to foresee their doom

Chorus: What sort of cure (*φάρμακον*) did you find for this illness?

Prom: I made blind hopes dwell in them. (248-50)

Hope is the most ambiguous of *pharmaka*: it offers both insight and illusion, it is both a boon and a poison.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXISTING INTERPRETATIONS OF SOPHOCLES' ANTIGONE

5.1. The directly separative point of view

As was to be expected, existing interpretations of the play have been deeply influenced by separative cosmology. The two major interpretative trends with respect to the *Antigone*, the orthodox view and the Hegelian view, correspond to direct separativeness and indirect separativeness (viz. harmonization), the two major European cosmological strategies in dealing with contradictions and ambiguity. For centuries the *Antigone* was interpreted in the light of directly separative cosmology. Separative interpretations constituted such an overwhelming majority, that this interpretation has been labelled the orthodox point of view (Hester SU 12). It is characteristic of the separative orthodoxy of interpretations of the *Antigone* that the category of justice should be singled out as the tragedy's primary subject matter. Within this category an unambiguous division is made between absolute justice, as represented by Antigone, and total baseness, as represented by Creon. This interpretative tradition, starting with Schlegel (cf. Eberlein DKT 17-20), is still very strong, thanks to well-known interpreters like Jebb (A xxii), Reinhardt (S 86, 264), Diller (GMW 8-10), Müller (SA 11), Else (MA 40) and Kamerbeek (A 28). Typical of this trend is Müller's remark: "Antigone is completely right, Creon is completely wrong." Though sometimes it is conceded that at the start of his career Creon is not so bad, the orthodox are convinced that in the end he turns out to be a tyrant, destroying the purity of a maiden who is merely obeying the call of duty.

From the separative point of view, the *Antigone* is primarily seen as a moral tragedy. Problems of justice and injustice dominate over other cosmological categories, and there is no doubt about the possibility of separating the sphere of justice from that of injustice. An ambiguous sphere between justice and injustice, for example in the idea of hubris, is not believed relevant. The problem of the *Antigone* is not regarded as a problem of internal division and ambiguity, but as a problem of the destruction of a person who represents an inherently just principle. The unambiguous separation between Antigone and Creon implies a separation of the divine sphere, to which Antigone is thought to belong, from the merely human realm to which Creon is confined. Creon's law has no divine aspects, it is a merely human edict. As such it belongs to a sphere

which cannot even touch the purity of Antigone's holy status (Reinhardt S 74-75). In contrast to Antigone, Creon merely proclaims a "menschlicher Machtsspruch" (Lesky GL 321).¹ In this conception there is no problem of an intermingling of the divine and the subhuman (the natural) in the deeds of Antigone and Creon. According to some interpreters, notably Reinhardt, the divine law which Antigone follows is also that which 'nature in itself' wants (S 86). In that case the divine and natural character of Antigone is opposed to the human and non-natural behaviour of Creon. To many adherents of the separative point of view the divine world is no longer in inner conflict, as in the tragedies of Aeschylus, but essentially unified, contrary to the human world. Müller maintains, for example, that in the *Antigone* there is no "innere göttliche Widerstreit" (SA 172). He speaks of the "power and perfection of the god" (SA 138).

In the separative view, Antigone is isolated as the only protagonist of the tragedy, and as such her pure identity remains unimpaired. To the orthodox the unity of this tragedy is the unity and purity of one protagonist; Creon is separated from the tragic realm because he is a mere human being. Therefore he is unable to contaminate Antigone's isolated heroism. It is interesting to note that to an interpreter like Müller, Creon cannot be a protagonist because he has no unified identity. Because in yielding to the persuasion of Tiresias, his behaviour is changeable, Creon has no fixed identity and therefore he cannot be accepted as a tragic hero (SA 19). The counterpart to this separation of Creon from the tragic realm is that the purity of Antigone's identity is believed to remain uncontaminated. She never recedes from her position, she stands by her just decisions, even in the face of death. Her lamentations at the end of her life are no weakness. As Müller has it, she remains "ungebrochen" (SA 265). The end of her life does not bring any significant reversal (Müller SA 184). If Antigone is seen as a unified person who sticks to her decisions, even under the threat of execution, it is understandable that many an orthodox interpreter should compare her to a Christian martyr (Jebb A xxv—Reinhardt disagrees S 85), or, at least, to a romantic or existential rebel (cf. Hester SU 42). In our days this romanticism comes to light in comparisons between Antigone and Ulrike Meinhof (cf. Steiner AS 151, 296 on H. Böll).

¹ Reinhardt phrases this separation between the human and the divine very clearly: "Hier steht nicht Recht gegen Recht, Idee gegen Idee, sondern das Göttliche, als Allumfassendes, mit dem das junge Mädchen sich in Einklang weiss, gegen das Menschliche als das Beschränkte, Blinde, von sich selbst Gejagte, in sich selbst Verstellte und Verfälschte" (S 87).

Antigone's unimpaired identity is reflected in her relations with others. On her part, they are of the utmost purity. Her behaviour towards Creon may be stormy, but morally it is immaculate. With respect to her sister Ismene she is moved by her duties (Jebb A xxix), and for Haemon she has the purest form of affection (Jebb A xxx). The reverse of this coin is that in her purity she is completely isolated. Being merely human, the other persons in the tragedy do not understand her divine stature (Müller SA 16).

In the orthodox view the realms of life and death, and the problems of justice and injustice with regard to these realms, are clearly separated. There is no doubt that Antigone was completely justified in burying Polyneices, and that Creon had no right at all either to leave Polyneices unburied or to bury Antigone alive. Antigone's proclamation of her adherence to the sphere of death, and her eventual suicide, are unproblematic as well. Her suicide is justified as a "Freitod." And her corporeal life, being mortal, is separated from her eternal principles. Müller for example maintains "that she is right with respect to the truth of the gods, and that she continues to be right, though as a human being she is destroyed" (SA 103). Antigone's devotion to the realm of death is clearly opposed to Creon's clinging to life. The former attitude is considered high and divine, the latter low and merely human. Reinhardt speaks of a conflict between "the high, the unconditional, that which is devoted to death, and that which maintains itself, the conditional" (S 264).

Because in the orthodox point of view Antigone really knows the nature of divine law, it is beyond doubt that her insight is pure and uncontaminated, and clearly opposed to the mere opinions of Creon. As Müller maintains: "If we acknowledge the relationship between truth and appearance, we are protected against the danger of considering Creon as a Sophoclean protagonist" (SA 12). The consequence of the notion that Antigone's insight is pure is that not only Creon's opinions should be separated from it as impure and faulty, but also Ismene's remarks and almost all statements made by the chorus.

Of course the orthodox view is not totally non-tragic: it does not reduce all tragic division to clear-cut oppositions. Müller for example emphasizes the tragic conflict between the righteousness of Antigone's principles and her downfall. The model of holy order is destroyed by the enemies of the gods. In Müller's view—and here we agree with him—the *Antigone* is therefore neither edifying nor reconciliatory (SA 273).

Our objection to the orthodox view expounded by Müller is that it reduces the manifold interconnected tragic problems to a single duality, that of holiness and its destruction. It does not acknowledge that the *An-*

tigone is part of an interconnected cosmology, and therefore permeated with all sorts of internal divisions and ambiguities which make it inadequate to divide justice and insight sharply from injustice and error. There is historical evidence undermining most of the tenets of orthodox separatism (cf. for example Höppener BSA, Mette AS, Linforth AC 193, Knox HT 84-86, SP 13-15, Ferguson PMF 45, Sourvinou-Inwood ACM passim), and there are philological objections to the orthodox view: the unity of orthodoxy is bought at the price of excluding major parts of the tragedy. In the orthodox view it is impossible not to reject as illusory or unimportant many utterances by Antigone herself, nor is it an accident that a majority of the orthodoxy should reject Antigone's lines 904-20, because these lines impair the purity of her unified identity and the loftiness of her principles. The most persistent problem for the separative conception is that it rests on prematurely expelling Creon out of the tragedy, even though his presence in it is more prolonged than Antigone's, and even though in innumerable aspects his fate structurally mirrors Antigone's fate. In short, the orthodox view excludes certain tragic aspects from the *Antigone* (Hester SU 12).²

5.2. The harmonizing point of view

The great advantages of harmonizing conceptions of the *Antigone* over the directly separative ones are that they are better able to account for the deep structure of oppositions and transformations characterizing the tragedy. They are also better able to detect the undermining force of negativity, not only between the protagonists, but within them as well. The harmonizing point of view has been expounded paradigmatically in the philosophy of Hegel, which has had a great influence on a major trend in modern philological interpretation of the *Antigone*. Of course we do not pretend to give an adequate account of Hegel's thought as such. We shall merely discuss his remarks regarding the *Antigone*.

In Hegel's conception, Creon and Antigone are both representatives of ethical powers (*sittliche Mächte*) of equal strength and justice. The public law of the state and love and duty to the family are opposed as a struggle of one-sided aspects of justice.³ This point of view has found

² Even scholars who have completely undermined the presuppositions of the orthodox, in the end return to a glorification of Antigone at the expense of Creon. This happens in interpretations like those of Knox (HT 116), Eberlein (DKT 22-29) and Winnington-Ingram (SI 91-149, esp 119-20).

³ "Jede dieser beiden Seiten verwirklicht nur die eine der sittlichen Mächte, hat nur die eine derselben zum Inhalt, das ist die Einseitigkeit, und der Sinn der ewigen Gerechtigkeit ist, dass Beide Unrecht erlangen, weil sie einseitig sind, aber damit auch Beide Recht[...]" (Hegel PR II 133-34, cf. A II 51-52).

many modern followers, not only in structuralist interpretations of the *Antigone* (Vernant MTG 33, Segal TC 152-206, Vidal-Naquet in Vernant/Vidal-Naquet MTG II 161-63), but among adherents of other interpretative methods as well (for a list cf. Hester SU 52f.).

It is striking that in the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* Hegel should have accounted for the interconnectedness of all the cosmological oppositions which we have mentioned. In general, philologists have not been able to present such a complete cosmological interpretation of the tragedy—they have mostly confined themselves to a few categories only. According to Hegel, the protagonists Antigone and Creon represent the “natural” and the “conscious” respectively (PG 321). That does not mean that Antigone’s behaviour is purely natural and Creon’s purely conscious. By their deeds both protagonists transcend nature, yet continue to belong to it. Just that is the dual character of their acts, that they both belong to nature and to spirit (PG 342). In modern philology, the relationship of the protagonists to nature has been worked out in detail. Many interpreters have emphasized that the opposition between natural and accultured behaviour permeates the tragedy. More than Hegel do they acknowledge the negativity of Sophoclean comparisons of the protagonists to natural events like storms and animals (cf. Knox HT 42). They consider the tragic human position between animals and gods as essential to the play (Goheen ISA 26).

According to Hegel natural law, as represented by Antigone, is a direct, simple form of justice, of divine nature. Creon’s law on the other hand represents the human community (PG 319). But this opposition between divine law and human law should not be interpreted in an orthodox vein. Creon’s law is merely called human because in Hegel’s view it is self-aware, but it is as absolute as is Antigone’s (PG 332). Neither law can claim to be more essential than the other (PG 337). Therefore it should be emphasized that the human character of Creon’s law does not preclude its divineness. In Hegel’s *Aesthetik* this is made explicit. Antigone reveres the lower gods of Hades, and Creon is not ‘merely human’: he is a representative of the Olympian “Tagesgötter” of the self-aware citizens and of the state (A II 51-52).

This notion of Hegel’s, that Antigone represents the lower gods and Creon the higher gods has had great influence in philology. It is acknowledged by adherents of the orthodox view as well (cf. Müller SA 232), and it is all-pervasive in the harmonizing view. What Hegel does not mention, but what is essential to the ambiguous nature of the tragedy, is that many problems of the *Antigone* are centred around a third category of divine powers: confusing powers like Dionysus, Aphrodite, Eros and Ares. This ambiguity has been recognized by Bultmann, who

opposes Olympian and nether gods on the one hand to the confusing power of Eros on the other (PHA 319). The power of the ambiguous deities has been worked out in detail by Winnington-Ingram, who calls Ares, Aphrodite and Dionysus a trio of deities representing irrational emotion (SI 110).

The oppositions between Antigone and Creon are not only relevant on the vertical axis, between nature and the gods, but on the horizontal, social axis as well. As a law of nature and of the lower gods, Antigone's ideal belongs to the sphere of the family, which Hegel considers a more 'natural' relationship than the state and which belongs to the sphere of the lower gods through its preoccupations with burial. But in Hegel's conception the family is not purely natural. On the contrary, by its care for burial of the dead it prevents corpses from being devoured by the forces of nature (PG 322-23), and hence is a force of civilization.

In its capacity of law of the people and the state, Creon's law of the "Tagesgötter" is equally essential as Antigone's, and in Hegel's eyes the conflict between them is inevitable. In order to maintain itself, the state *has to* injure (*verletzen*) and confuse (*verwirren*) the independence of family members. If the family becomes too powerful, the community is threatened with destruction: a return to natural conditions (PG 324). According to Hegel, the opposition between family and state is also reflected in sexual difference. Women stay at home, organize the house, honour the penates. Men have to leave the home to carve out a career in the polis. Therefore Antigone defends the feminine principles against Creon's male law (PG 326).

A point which is not mentioned by Hegel, but emphasizing Antigone's dangerous ambiguity, is that this heroine does not perform the feminine duty of procreation. Not only men have to leave their family, but women too: they have to move to their husband's house. This omission in Hegel's interpretation may be explained by his curious ideas on the relationship between brother and sister. Hegel maintains that, contrary to that between man and woman, which is always tinged with nature's aim of procreation, this relationship is completely devoid of natural desire, and therefore direct and pure. According to Hegel, only brother and sister can accept each other as irreplaceable, contrary to parents and children (PG 326).

Here many modern philologists disagree with Hegel. He overlooks the ambiguous nature of the relationship between Antigone and Polyneices, and so continues to separate Antigone from her tragic status in a romantic idealization. In Greek eyes, the proper thing for Antigone to do was to leave her family and to join that of her husband. Her persistent attachment to her brother is a dangerous transgression verging on the in-

cestuous. Antigone's refusal of procreation, mirrored in Creon's aversion to sexuality (cf. Winnington Ingram SI 95-97), is a transgression of her marital duties.⁴

In so far as burying the dead is a female duty within the family, Antigone's law is also that of death (PG 320-21) and the night (PG 319, 339), as against Creon's law of life and the day, says Hegel. Here we must disagree with his interpretation on historical grounds—burial was not a female prerogative, and certainly not of an unmarried girl.

That Antigone's respect for death is not inherently superior to Creon's lack of reverence becomes clear from the question of the justification of Polyneices' burial. Hegel acknowledges the civilizing power of burial. This act interrupts the damaging work of natural forces and lower forms of life (*niedrige Lebendigkeiten*) on the corpse (PG 323). By burial the family interrupts this dishonouring activity (*entehrendes Tun*) and marries (*vermählt*) the body to the womb (*Schoß*) of the earth. But this does not annul the justice of Creon's refusal to bury the body:

He who wantonly attacked the spirit's highest form of consciousness, the spirit of the community, must be stripped of the honour of his entire and finished being, the honour due to the spirit of the departed. (PS 286) (German PG 339)

How difficult the problem of justice is in Hegel's eyes becomes evident when we realize that Polyneices was not simply a malefactor either. It was merely an accident of nature that Eteocles was born before Polyneices. If the government of the state is at stake, such an unimportant difference should have no influence. Yet it must have, because government cannot bear the duality of individuality (*Zweiheit der Individualität*). This implies an inevitable fission between brothers. The conclusion is that both were just and unjust (PG 338).

In Hegel's conception Antigone's law, as a law of nature and of the family, belongs to the sphere of the unconscious, whereas Creon's law of the state belongs to that of self-awareness (PG 319, 321). But this opposition is not absolute. By positive action both protagonists claim to have knowledge of the truth. And finally, according to Hegel, both have to acknowledge that their claims to insight were manifestations of hubris. The irony of events shows that both erred through one-sidedness and lack of self-knowledge. This conception of the hubristic claims of insight of both protagonists can also be found in many modern interpretations. Ac-

⁴ Vernant remarks: "Antigone n'a pas voulu entendre l'appel à se détacher des 'siens' et de la *philia* pour s'ouvrir à l'autre, reconnaître Éros et, dans l'union avec un 'étranger', transmettre à son tour la vie. L'opposition *philia/éros*, attachement familial-désir sexuel, tient donc une place majeure dans l'architecture du drame" (MTG 90).

according to Eberlein, for example, prudence would point to a way out of the tragic dialectics of human existence—but Creon and Antigone are unable to be prudent: they are driven on by their awesomeness. The dreadfulness of the gift of man's immense talents and aptitude is that it turns to good as well as to evil. Therefore mortals are unable to know what is just and what is not (DKT 30).

Hegel's interpretation of the *Antigone* is not only extremely important because he has elaborated the oppositions between the protagonists in the six cosmological categories, but also because he has shown that these oppositions are not static differences. The opposites are not only one-sided, they are internally divided as well. The oppositions are not homogeneous, they are internally fissured and contaminated by their opposites (cf. Derrida GI 166-67). In this connection it is important to assess Hegel's conception of the tragic nature of human action in general. Only by action can man establish his identity (PG 331). But every act disturbs the quiet movement of the ethical world. As soon as man acts, this world is torn apart, it suffers a division (*Entzweiung*). That implies that human action is essentially tragic. It is necessarily one-sided and ignorant of its own character. Action is hubris, and as such inevitably guilty—only non-action like the being of a stone is not guilty—even the action of a child is. In its content ethical action comprises the moment of wrongdoing (*Verbrechen*) (PG 334).

In chapter three we have remarked that transgressions are of a twofold nature: they can be relative or absolute. Hegel points out precisely this duality of hubris. Those who act are inevitably one-sided: they have to choose one law, and are thus compelled to consider its opposite unimportant and negative (PG 334). Antigone believes that Creon's law is merely accidental violence, while Creon thinks Antigone just a disobedient person (PG 332). Both are one-sided because they forget that they belong to the other side as well. As Hegel points out at the end of the *Aesthetik*: Antigone forgets that she is not only a sister, but a king's daughter and a citizen as well, and Creon does not acknowledge that he is not only the king, but a father and married man as well. It should be emphasized that these forms of one-sidedness are inevitable if actions are to be effective.

But besides the relative transgression there is the absolute transgression of one's own principles. Those who act also inevitably misjudge the meaning of their own actions (PG 331). By neglecting Antigone's justice, Creon also contaminates his own principles. The irony of the events makes his law become tyrannical hubris (*tyrannische Frevel*). The same is true of Antigone. She pretends to insight into the nature of all laws, her own included, meaning that she falls into the hubris of having knowledge (*den Frevel des Wissens*) with respect to human law and divine law (cf. PG

309, 317). This implies that the tragic guilt of the protagonists consists of their one-sidedness as well as of their illusions with respect to their own actions.⁵ This extremely fruitful idea that Antigone and Creon are not only one-sided, but also reckless with respect to their own principles, has been brought forward in modern philology by scholars like Eberlein (DKT 32), Hester (SU 40, in a misguided attack on Hegel) and Segal (TC 177).

Hegel's analysis also shows that the tragic events in the play reveal that the protagonists' one-sided actions go together. It is a tragic irony that the principles of the family and of the state are inseparable (PG 335). Contrary to the orthodox view, this implies that it is not only Creon who undergoes a reversal, but that both protagonists eventually have to acknowledge that they were wrong, and end up in completely reversed positions. Both have to recognize their *hamartia* (PG 336, 340), and both undergo a reversal of their fate. As Hegel points out at the end of the *Aesthetik*: Antigone dies before she can "enjoy the marital bed," and Creon's procreative power is stricken as well, by the loss of his sons and wife. In modern philology the idea that both protagonists undergo a reversal, both as regard their insight and with respect to their position in life, has been put forward by interpreters like Jens (AI 307-08), Hogan (PA 96) and Rohdich (A 11).

The extraordinary penetration of Hegel's analysis of the *Antigone* notwithstanding, the problems of pollution, transgression and ambiguity make it impossible to integrate the tragedy into philosophy in Hegel's way. In a number of aspects Hegel merely points out oppositions between categories, without assessing the foundation and medium of these oppositions: ambiguous power. He pays no attention to the confusing, ambiguous gods, he does not point out Antigone's hubris with respect to Polyneices, he does not mention the dangerous positions of the tragic heroes between nature and the divine. In this connection it is important to note that his conception of hybrid one-sidedness is not opposed to prudence, of which Ismene and the guard are models. Yet it is only through accepting the notion that recklessness and prudence are inevitable and irreconcilable aspects of human behaviour that the tragic ambiguity of the *Antigone* is revealed.

Nor does Hegel put much emphasis on a typically interconnected characteristic of the *Antigone*: its obsession with pollution, control of am-

⁵ "[Das Selbstbewusstsein] erfährt also in seiner Tat sowohl den Widerspruch *jener Mächte*, wherein die Substanz sich entzweite, und ihre gegenseitige Zerstörung, wie den Widerspruch seines Wissens von der Sittlichkeit seines Handelns mit dem, was an und für sich sittlich ist, und findet *seinen eignen* Untergang" (Hegel PG 317-18).

biguity by ritual, and perversion of ritual. The only point that he mentions in this connection—important enough in itself—is that the exposure of Polyneices' body is shameful, but at the same time a power undermining Creon's kingship: "The dead man, whose right has been outraged, knows how to find implements for his revenge which are as powerful as the power that injures him" (PG 339). Hegel is referring to the powerful pollution of the altars by Polyneices' remains. But the whole *Antigone* is permeated with inherited and unpredictable pollution (for example in the Labdacid family, in the exposure of the corpse, in the mutual slaying of Polyneices and Eteocles, in Antigone's burial, in her suicide, etc.). These pollutions are counteracted more than once by measures forming examples of controlled ambiguity, e.g. Creon's decree that Polyneices should remain unburied. Through ritual measures Creon hopes to employ this pollution to beneficial ends, but in the end all control of ambiguity turns out to be perverted—tragic ambiguity is shown to prevail.

This is where we disagree most fundamentally with Hegel. To him, the outcome of the tragedy is a reconciliation of state and family in a condition of absolute justice. In his eyes the result of the tragedy is that only justice obtains (*dass nichts gilt als das Rechte*). By the submission of both sides absolute justice has been achieved (PG 337). In the end, the workings of fate turn out to be justice. But this harmonizing point of view can only be maintained if the tragic ambiguity of the tragedy is silenced. The final outcome of the *Antigone* is not justice, not merely because justice is inevitably intermingled with injustice, but primarily because in this tragedy justice and injustice are manifestations of ambiguous power, and this power underlies and pervades the distinction.

Modern philologists generally do not follow Hegel's notion of a reconciliation of the principles of family and state in a higher harmony. But even if they acknowledge the importance of pollution and ambiguity, most of them cling to the harmonizing view. They accept the ritual character of the fates of Creon and Antigone, but they will not go any further than this ritual ambiguity. They believe that the fate of Antigone and Creon is finally justified, because it is part of the ritual by means of which the community is able to maintain itself.⁶ Certainly, there is an aspect of ritual ambiguity to the scapegoating of Antigone and Creon, but an interpretation of the tragedy in which this is the final, harmonious

⁶ Rohdich's ideas form a good example: "Die Dichtung bürdet der Person die Folgen einer schuldhaften Massnahme auf [...] und jagt sie als Sündenbock aus dem Schein einer gereinigten Gesellschaft, die vom individuellen Miasma ihres frevelnden Führers genas. Aus dem Untergang der Helden und der Vernichtung ihres Widerparts geht die Polis nicht nur als das unbeschädigt Überlebende, sondern in seinem Bestand Gerechtfertigte und Bejahte hervor" (Rohdich A 229).

answer is a surreptitious exponent of separative cosmology: it is quietly forgotten that the exorcism of Antigone and Creon is paradoxical, because it shows the city thriving on the loss of its very leaders, those who are high in the city. The exorcism is partly an auto-exorcism, which points to the ambiguity of power.

The power of which Antigone and Creon are the vehicles cannot be divided into just and unjust parts, nor can it be harmonized in a final scene of higher justice. Their reckless acts, their ambiguous fates, their holy pollutions, are alien to coherent, separative or harmonious thought. Therefore these protagonists cannot be incorporated into any philosophical system. Though we deplore Derrida's romantic, orthodox emphasis on Antigone as the sole heroine of the tragedy, we do agree with his description of her tragically ambiguous position: Antigone is an impossible desire which is unable to live, which both undermines order and supports it from her crypt.⁷

⁷ "[...]cet immense désir impossible qui ne pouvait pas vivre, capable seulement de renverser, paralyser ou excéder un système et une histoire, d'interrompre la vie du concept, de lui couper le souffle ou bien, ce qui revient au même, de le supporter depuis le dehors ou le dessous d'une crypte.

Crypte—on aurait dit du transcendental ou du refoulé, de l'impensé ou de l'exclu—qui organise le sol auquel elle n'appartient pas" (Derrida Gl 187).

CHAPTER SIX

THE *STASIMA* OF SOPHOCLES' ANTIGONE

6.0. Introduction

In this chapter we will test our hypothesis concerning the interconnected character of the *Antigone* by applying it to the choral songs. We hope to show that these songs are of a primarily cosmological nature, that in all of them the six fundamental cosmological categories are represented in their interconnectedness, and that the paradoxical and ambiguous character of the cosmos and man's place in it is exemplified in all the songs.

The analysis of the *stasima* will be of a structural nature: they will be considered as differential repetitions of the same cosmological themes, and their deep structural similarities (on a more or less synchronic axis) will be the focus of our attention.

Because we are convinced that all choral songs belong together in an interconnected whole with cosmological significance, we will offer objections to two essentially separative interpretations of them: the one denying the thematic unity of the *stasima*, the other denying their contextual relevance. The first interpretation maintains that the choral songs do not really belong together, because they lack sequential order (Alexanderson SCA 105) or because as a whole they are cosmologically irrelevant (Schwinge RCA 304-05). The most consistent separative interpretation with respect to the thematic unity of the *stasima* is that of Müller, who maintains that the opinions of the chorus have to be discarded as *Fehlurteile* of the mediocre bourgeoisie (SA 16).¹ This does not condemn the statements of the chorus to insignificance, because Müller separates the surface intentions of the chorus, which are mere appearance, from the secondary meaning of their words in which he believes the true opinions of the poet Sophocles to shine through (SA 7). These separative interpretations have to pay the heavy price of emptying the *stasima* of tragic ambiguity, of what Coleman is referring to when he calls them "a disturbing set of variations on a single theme" (RCA 26) and Kirkwood when he speaks of their "atmosphere of ambiguity" (DRC 14).

Those who deny the contextual relevance of the choral songs are even more rigorously separative. They believe that there are no significant

¹ "Es ist paradox, dass er [der Chor] nun ein Lied auf die Grösse des Menschen anstimmt. Das ist nur dadurch möglich, dass er nicht begreift, wo die wahre Menschengrösse erscheint" (Müller SA 83 on the first *stasimon*).

connections between the *stasima* and the episodes surrounding them. Some maintain that it is a weakness of this tragedy that the choral songs are mere interludes between the episodes (Ronnet SPT 157, Waldock SD 112-14, further examples in Rohdich A 19-20). Those who deny the thematic relevance of the *stasima*, like Müller, also have to denude them of much contextual relevance. Rather than revising their separative preconceptions, these interpretations endorse the *a priori* idea that Sophocles created a tragedy with flaws (Coleman RCA 4).

To clarify the meaning of the choral songs we first have to determine the function of the chorus within the tragedy. Traditionally, a separative dichotomy is maintained: either the chorus is considered the poet's mouthpiece, or it is regarded as a protagonist. In the 19th century Boeckh expressed the first point of view. He maintained that the chorus stands above the actors, and presents us with the poet's general judgment (AS 71; cf. Alexanderson SCA 86). The other point of view goes back as far as Aristotle, who says that the choruses of tragedies, at least those of Sophocles, should be regarded as one of the actors.² The thought behind the dichotomy seems to be: if the chorus represents the view of Sophocles it cannot be an actor; if it is an actor, it is unable to represent the poet, actors being elements in the drama, not reviewers of it. Some scholars, for example Burckhardt, maintain that the chorus vacillates between the two points of view.³

The latter theory is singularly unattractive, because there is no criterion to determine what function the chorus is performing in any specific case. But the other points of view are also doubtful. Is the division according to which the chorus either acts as the poet's mouthpiece or as an actor really adequate? The problem with the dichotomy is its preoccupation with the poet Sophocles' opinions. It is doubtful whether these can or should be distilled from a tragedy. The nature of tragedy is that it is a continuous struggle between truth and falsehood, between justice and injustice, without there being a final truth. We do not believe that the tragedy contains a mouthpiece for the poet—all participants share in the tragedy's ironical interplay of illumination and darkness.

² καὶ τὸν χορὸν δὲ ἕνα δεῖ ὑπολαμβάνειν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, καὶ μόνιον εἶναι τοῦ ὅλου καὶ συναγωνίζεσθαι μὴ ὥσπερ Εὐριπίδῃ, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ Σοφοκλεῖ. (The chorus too should be regarded as one of the actors. It should form part of the whole and share in the action, not as in Euripides but as in Sophocles) (Poet 18, 1456a25ff).

³ "Sein [Sophokles'] Chor ist da, wo er sich auf die Handlung selbst einlässt, oft unsicher und selbst verblendet, sobald er sich aber zu einer allgemeinen Betrachtung der Gesetze des Daseins sammelt, erhaben; d.h. Sophokles klebt nicht fest an der Fiktion, dass er nur Greise oder Dienerinnen usw. von da und da singen lasse, sondern behandelt den Chor abwechselnd als wirklichen und als idealen Bestandteil" (Burckhardt GK 2.285).

On the other hand it is just as misleading to call the chorus an actor. Its utterances in the *stasima* are of a specific lyrical nature and it is more reflective than the actors. But the fact that the chorus comments on the actors and on the cosmos does not mean that it is a vehicle for the poet's opinions. The tragedy undermines such separations between true and untrue statements.

6.1. The first *stasimon*

We use the text of Dain/Mazon (DM). All differences with the texts of Jebb (J) and Dawe (D) are accounted for.

Πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἄν-
θρώπου δεινότερον πέλει·
τοῦτο καὶ πολιοῦ πέραν
335 πόντου χειμερίῳ νότῳ
χωρεῖ, περιβρυχίοισιν
περῶν ὑπ' οἰδμασιν, θεῶν
τε τὰν ὑπερτάταν, Γᾶν
ἄφθιτον, ἀκαμάταν, ἀποτρύεται,
340 ἰλλομένων ἀρότρων ἔτος εἰς ἔτος,
ἵππεϊν γένει πολεῶν.

Κουφονόων τε φῦλον ὀρ-
νίθων ἀμφιβαλὼν ἄγει,
καὶ θηρῶν ἀγρίων ἔθνη
345 πόντου τ' εἰναλίαν φύσιν
σπεύρῃσιν δικτυοκλώστοις
περιφραδῆς ἀνὴρ· κρατεῖ
δὲ μηχαναῖς ἀγραύλου
350 θηρὸς ὀρεσσιβάτα, λασιαύχενά θ'
ἵππον ὀχμάζεται ἀμφίλοφον ζυγὸν
οὔρειόν τ' ἀκμηῆτα ταῦρον.

Καὶ φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν
φρόνημα καὶ ἀστυνόμους
355 ὀργὰς ἐδιδάξατο, καὶ δυσάυλων
πάγων ὑπαίθρεια καὶ
δύσομβρα φεύγειν βέλη
360 παντοπόρος· ἄπορος ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται
τὸ μέλλον· "Αἶδα μόνον
φεῦξιν οὐκ ἐπάξεται, νό-
σων δ' ἀμηχάνων φυγὰς
ξυμπέφρασται.

Wonders are many, and none is more wonderful than man; the power that crosses the white sea, driven by the stormy south-wind, making a path under surges that threaten to engulf him; and Earth, the eldest of the gods, the immortal, the unwearied, doth he wear, turning the soil with the offspring of horses, as the ploughs go to and fro from year to year.

And the light-hearted race of birds, and the tribes of savage beasts, and the sea-brood of the deep, he snares in the meshes of his woven toils, he leads captive, man excellent in wit. And he masters by his arts the beast whose lair is in the wilds, who roams the hills; he tames the horse of shaggy mane, he puts the yoke upon its neck, he tames the tireless mountain bull.

And speech, and wind-swift thought, and all the moods that mould a state, hath he taught himself; and how to flee the arrows of the frost, when 'tis hard lodging under the clear sky, and the arrows of the rushing rain; yea, he hath resource for all; without resource he meets nothing that must come: only

- 365 Σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν
τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων,
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει,
νόμους παρείρων χθονὸς
θεῶν τ' ἑνορχον δίκαν
370 ὑφίπολις· ἄπολις ὅτω τὸ μὴ καλὸν
ξύνεστι τόλμας χάριν·
μήτ' ἐμοὶ παρέστιος γέ-
νοιτο μήτ' ἴσον φρονῶν
375 ὅς τὰδ' ἔρδοι.
- against Death shall he call for aid
in vain; but from baffling
maladies he hath devised escapes.
- Cunning beyond fancy's dream is
the fertile skill which brings him,
now to evil, now to good. When
he honours the laws of the land,
and that justice which he hath
sworn by the gods to uphold,
proudly stands his city: no city
hath he who, for his rashness,
dwells with sin. Never may he
share my hearth, never think my
thoughts, who doth these things!

341. πολεῦων. D: πολεῦον 343. ἄγει. D: ἀγρεῖ 351. ὀχμάζεται We follow J and D.
DM gives (ὕπ)άξεται 351. ζυγόν. J: ζυγῶν; D: ζυγῶι 356. ὑπαίθρεια. We follow D.
J and DM give (ἐν)αἰθρεια 362. ἐπάξεται. D: ἐπεύζεται 367. παρείρων. J and D:
γεραίρων 375. ἔρδοι. J and D: ἔρδει

It is no accident that generations of interpreters have referred to the first choral song as the ode on man. It is certainly part of its multiple significance that man's powers of imposing order on chaos are venerated, and this order is of such a strict nature that a structural approach in pairs of oppositions is singularly apt (Barié VGL, Lardinois/Oudemans NOM), but such separative interpretations of the *stasimon* merely show one side of this inseparable mixture of order and ambiguity. As an example of the separative conception we quote Jebb's interpretation:

Its [= the ode's] theme is man's daring,—his inventiveness, and the result to his happiness. Man is master of sea and land; he subdues all other creatures; he has equipped his life with all resources, except a remedy against death. His skill brings him to prosperity, when he observes divine and human laws, but to ruin when he breaks them.

A 69)

It is clear that the ode is indeed concerned with man's abilities to impose order and separation on the confusing powers which surround him. This civilizing ability is shown to be effective in all cosmological categories.

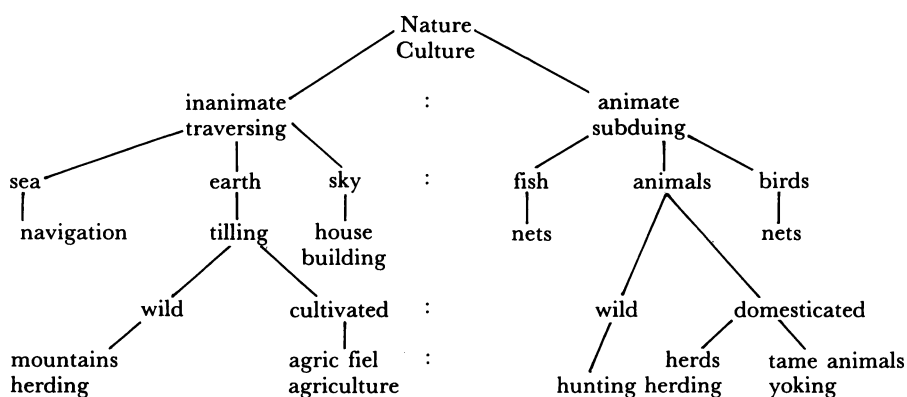
In the first strophe and part of the second man's civilized order is opposed to the three fundamental elements of inanimate nature: the sea, the earth and the sky.⁴ Man tames wild nature by using wind and sea for navigation, by agriculture, and by building houses to protect himself

⁴ Its importance is implied in the threat of the winter gales, and is explicitly mentioned in the arrows (of frost) under the sky.

against the weather. Man's intelligence thus imposes boundaries upon the menacing, wild powers of the elements (Goheen ISA 44).

In the first antistrophe the song turns from inanimate nature to living nature, as it develops in the three fundamental elements. Again man employs his civilizing devices to impose his order upon living nature. He is able to catch the birds which belong to the sky, he subdues the animals which belong to the land, and he is master over the inhabitants of the sea. In all three cases typical instruments of civilization are employed: nets and yokes.

The cultivated land is separated from wild nature which surrounds it. This distinction comes to the fore in Sophocles' separation of two species of animals, wild animals and domesticated ones. The first category is the prey of human hunting, in which order is brought about by artfully woven nets (347). The domesticated animals are not hunted, but herded or employed for agriculture. This further division of the domesticated animals again forms a model of the separation between wild nature and civilized nature. Domesticated animals living in the wild are those which are herded (it is plausible that the adjective *ἀγρᾱλος* refers to animals under pastoral care.⁵) The animals which are brought under the yoke, oxen and horses or mules (340), are domesticated and employed in the cultivated fields, e.g. for ploughing. An animal living even closer to the human sphere is the dog. From Ant 257 and 1081-82 it is clear that these domestic animals are distinguished from wild ones, the *θήρες*, yet they remain wild, and hence are dangerous polluters. The structure of man's civilizing powers with respect to nature can be rendered in the following diagram:



⁵ Homer often applies *ἀγρᾱλος* to cattle: Il 10.155, 17.521, 23.780. The shepherds in Il 18.162 are called *ποιμένες ἀγρᾱλοι*. See also Eur Ba 1188 (Van de Wijnpersse TJS 63). Because cattle is referred to further on in the *stasimon* some think it plausible that *ἀγρᾱλῶν θηρῶν ὀρεσσιβάτα* in 349-50 refers to herds of goats (Van de Wijnpersse TJS 62).

Note that there is a parallelism between animate and inanimate nature, which can be considered a transformation.

It is quite understandable that the orthodox view should consider this choral song an ode on man, because in this cosmological structure the gods are not prominent. That is the most striking difference with other cosmologies, such as that found in Aeschylus' *Prometheus*. There the divine origin of all human civilizing skills is emphasized, but in this *stasimon* man's autonomy is exalted at the cost of the divine sphere. It is as if man has become Promethean himself,⁶ as if he has obtained the power even to separate himself from the divine sphere. The gods are not completely absent from the song, however: in the first strophe terrestrial nature is identified with Ga, the eldest and highest of the gods (338), and later on Hades is mentioned, but apart from their justice (369), the Olympian gods are conspicuous by their absence.

In the second strophe the attention of the *stasimon* turns from the vertical to the horizontal axis. Here we are confronted with a separation between two social relations, which are of major importance to the whole tragedy. On the one hand there is the civilizing temper which founds cities, on the other there is the building of houses in which man can be at home with his family and escape the dangers of the wild places where he cannot be at home (*δυσσάυλων* – 356).⁷ This implies that the house should be considered as a focus of transformation. On the one hand it protects against the forces of nature, on the other hand it is a home, i.e. the place of specific social relations, of religious reverence, and of a special kind of justice. The opposition between the state and the home returns in the second antistrophe in a measure of separation against those who threaten both the order of the city and of the family: whoever is 'citiless' (*ἄπολις* – 370) is also barred from the domestic hearth (373)—in Greek eyes the interests of the city and those of the family must be reconciled.

Though Sophocles acknowledges that man's civilizing powers do not enable him to master death, he emphasizes man's ability to defend

⁶ Barié VGL 39-40, Benardete RSA I 189, Segal TC 170, cf. Aes Pr 253, 443, 450, 462, 467, 480, 506.

⁷ The idea that the building of houses is intended gains plausibility in the light of Arist de A 403b: οἰκίας ὁ μὲν λόγος τοιοῦτος, ὅτι σκέπασμα κωλυτικόν φθορᾶς ὑπ' ἀνέμων καὶ ὀμβρῶν καὶ καυμάτων (The formula of a house is a covering to protect from damage by wind, rain and heat).

himself against that potentially lethal intrusion of nature into culture: disease. Thanks to his intelligence man can escape from seemingly deadly forms of illness.

All these civilizing devices can only be maintained if man makes a double distinction with regard to justice. Though man has all the technical skills, there is always the danger that he will confuse justice with injustice: now he inclines to evil, then again to good (367). Therefore it is of the utmost importance to separate justice from injustice, and the just from the unjust. In the second strophe it has already been implied that the social relation of living together in the polis is impossible without the institution of laws: ἀστυνόμους (355) means "giving law to the city." The importance of this distinction shines through in the double meaning of the words ἀπολις and ὑψίπολις. These words mean 'who is citiless' and 'who is high in the city,' as well as 'whose city is no city' and 'whose city is high' (Pieri OLF 91, Fowler PPS 166). This is understandable: in an interconnected cosmology, whoever fails to separate justice from injustice will be an outcast, but his city itself is then endangered as well, especially if the evildoer should be high in the city, i.e. one of its leaders (compare the Babylonian examples, and Hes Op 219-37). The danger of injustice is felt to be so great that a term is employed for it which in this context, in combination with a negative concept, smacks of pollution: ξύνεστι (371). This 'clinging' of evil to the bad man means that immorality is felt to be an illness (Kamerbeek A 86), thus implying that a separation must be made in order to protect civilization from the danger of injustice. The evildoer is separated, from the community as well as from the family. The expression ἀπολις can be connected with the πρόρρησις, the exclusion of the guilty from the community.⁸ The family is purified in the same way. The barring of a miscreant from the domestic hearth expresses the fear for its contamination by irregular associations (Gernet RPG 414-15). Separation both from the city and from the family is necessary because bad company (κακή ὁμιλία) is, through contagion, connected with ἄτη (cf. Aes Sep 599-601, Diod 12.12.3).⁹ This fear is expressed in the hope of the chorus that it may not be thinking in the manner of such an outcast (374-75).

Maintaining justice implies a second separation: the laws of the land

⁸ Gernet RPG 69; cf. Demosth 20.18, Aes Ag 1410, Plato Leg 9.871a.

⁹ This avoidance is explicit in Plato Leg 9.854c: τὰς δὲ τῶν κακῶν συνουσίας φεῦγε ἀμεταστρεπτή. (But the company of evil men shun wholly, and turn not back). Compare Aes Fr 303R, Plato Leg 3.696b, Latte SSR 262.

have to be revered, but also the justice sworn by the gods.¹⁰ One of the many implications of this distinction is that both human and divine law have to be obeyed.

Finally, man's civilizing abilities are intimately connected with his powers of insight. His abilities to employ cunning devices against animals show that he has excellent wits (περιφραδής - 347), and thereby can be distinguished from the birds, which are merely light-thinking (Κουφονόων - 342) (Rohdich A 64). Man's "wind-swift" thinking (ἀνεμόεν φρόνημα) is so autonomous that it is self-taught (ἐδιδάξατο - 355), as is his power to build cities. Hence man is cunning (365), provided that he separates good thinking from evil thinking. Therefore he has to prevent the danger that evildoers should be thinking his thoughts (374)—that would be a dangerous confusion.

It would be an inverted separative error to deny the importance of man's abilities to bring order into chaos, or to minimize it by confining it to the sphere of appearances. Man's civilization is one element of the picture, an aspect that should be taken very seriously. But the other elements should not be forgotten, as separatists like Jebb are prone to do. The fundamental problem, as revealed in this *stasimon* and encountered in other interconnected cosmologies, is that in order to institute civilization man has to employ the selfsame power that he has to subdue. Ordering requires power, and therefore is ambiguous.¹¹ The institution of boundaries requires the power that oversteps boundaries.

In the fourth chapter we outlined to the Greek conception of nature as a clashing of elemental forces which can only be countered by man's civilizing powers, provided that the latter are even more active and versatile. In order to institute order man has to be powerful in movements of ascending, traversing and transcending which in ominous undertones permeate the whole *stasimon*. Through this power of expansion man's excessiveness and proneness to err can eventually be explained. A great many words, including prefixes and prepositions, carry this ominous notion of man's confronting, outflanking, rising above the challenges of the ferocious forces of nature (Benardete RSA I 187 with list).

First of all it is emphasized that nature itself is an awesome power. The winter storm (335) enabling man to traverse the sea's illimitable expanse is itself a formidable power. In this context it has to be remembered that

¹⁰ Note that the word ἔνδοξον contains an allusion to boundaries: ἔρπος is related to ὄρπος, implying the recognition of a boundary not to be transgressed (Rohdich A 74).

¹¹ Contra Lesky HG 86 and Weinstock SD 161, who refers to the first *stasimon* as a hymn to man's greatness, a triumphal song of culture.

Hesiod advises against travelling during the winter gales (Op 673-77).¹² Nature's excessive force is also made visible in the waves washing over the ships on all sides (περιβρυχίοισιν - 336), and by the piercing arrows of rain and frost (359). Man can only impose order on the overwhelming elements by separation if he employs even more power of transcending them, a power expressed in a prolonged *figura etymologica* (Kamerbeek A 82); he goes across the sea (πέραν), traversing the waves (περῶν - 337), he moves (πέλει - 333), he strides (χωρεῖ - 336), he travels towards the future (ἐπ' [...] ἔρχεται τὸ μέλλον - 360-61).¹³

The institution of order is a clash of forces. Man's blazing trails and scoring marks across the chaotic, undifferentiated sea points to his need of power to extract himself from the grasp of nature's forces.¹⁴ We agree with Müller (SA 87) that in this *stasimon* πόρος and its cognates may have to be understood in the fundamental sense of Alcman, who places Πόρος and Αἶσα, man's possibilities and the power of fate, in opposition to each other.¹⁵ Sophocles' *stasimon* also reflects the fundamental Greek opposition between *Pontos* and *Poros*, expressing the opposition between unbounded nature and culture (Detienne/Vernant RI 134, 153, 211). Because the sea is the illimitable, the ἄπειρος, it takes power to traverse it.¹⁶ The marking of routes and boundaries and the use of transcending power require the adaptable, agile intelligence called μῆτις.

That instituting civilization by imposing order on nature is a dangerous use of power, always on the verge of turning from transcendence to excess, is not explicitly stated in the *stasimon*, but the hints are too numerous to overlook. The word περάω for instance does not only mean 'transcending' but also 'transgressing' (e.g. in OC 153). That seafaring also possesses an aspect of taboo-breaking is hinted at Sophocles' text, but has been made explicit in Horace's description of

¹² Therefore we do not agree with the idea that χειμερίῳ νότῳ is merely a *dativus instrumentalis*. We agree with Müller SA 90 against Jebb A 70 that it is primarily temporal.

¹³ In this context of powerful movement the word πέλει retains its original sense of motion (Benardete RSA I 187), and perhaps in ἐπ'...ἔρχεται the hunting association of leaping upon a prey should be sensed (van de Wijnpersse TJS 30-31). How activist this picture of man is, is clear from the fact that in the ordinary Greek conception it is not man who goes to the future, but the future which comes to man (Rohdich A 66). For example in Pind Ol 10.9: ἐπελθὼν ὁ μέλλον χρόνος.

¹⁴ Aristophanes Eq 759: ἐκ τῶν ἀμηχανῶν πόρους εὐμήχανος πορίζειν (Versatile in procuring ways out of impossibilities).

¹⁵ Alcman Fr 3.13-14 Calame. Cf. Aes Pr 110-11 where fire is called the device "that hath proved to mortals a teacher in every art and a means to mighty ends (διδάσκαλος τέχνης πάσης βροτοῖς πέφηνε καὶ μέγας πόρος)."

¹⁶ ἄτης δ' ἄβυσσον πέλαγος οὐ μάλ' εὐπορον ("It is a sea of ruin, fathomless and impassable") (Aes Supp 470).

seafaring: "[...]si tamen impiae non tangenda rates transiliunt vada"¹⁷ ("[...]if nevertheless the impious boats skip across the untouchable waves.") Such an ambiguity is also visible in man's tilling of the earth. The earth is a goddess who is indefatigable. Nevertheless the traces which man leaves on its surface in order to make the earth civilized are also dangerous transgressions. Man wears the earth out (*ἀποτρύεται* - 339), which suggests a violation of the goddess Ga (Barié VGL 28). This ambiguity is most poignant in the lines 360-61. At first glance the line *ἄπορος ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται τὸ μέλλον* only means: "without resources man confronts nothing in the future," i.e.: man is all-powerful in his civilizing devices. But it is ominous that the words *παντοπόρος ἄπορος* should be juxtaposed to suggest an oxymoron. This points to a contrary interpretation of the sentence: "resourceless man comes to nothing(ness) that is his future,"¹⁸ which may well express a fundamental tension: through his power man is both all-pervading *and* without resources, he is able to do anything and nothing. Of course this suggestion needs confirmation.

When we turn our attention to the social separations we are confronted with a similar ambiguity, in the counterpart of *παντοπόρος ἄπορος*: *ὑψίπολις ἄπολις*. At first sight it seems as if the king and the scapegoat are nicely separated. But does the oxymoron not suggest that the one who is high in the city and the one without a city might exchange places, or even be one and the same? (Müller SA 86, Segal TC 167). This ominous suggestion is strengthened when we realize that the words *ἀστυνόμους ὀργᾶς* are but seemingly an innocent rendering of man's city-founding capacities. The word *ὀργή* points to man's temperament, his impetus. It is natural power, used more than once in a derogatory sense (for example by Creon in 280). This word points to the fact that founding a city requires the same power it has to expel (like the Erinyes in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*), and that civilization and wildness live in a dangerous confusion within the heart of the city (Rohdich A 65).

The inevitability of power also threatens to undermine the distinction between the just and the unjust. Sophocles does not believe that problems of justice and injustice can be solved by employing cunning devices. Despite his possession of *τέχνας* man confuses good and evil—this is the fundamental difference with the cosmology of the Sophist Protagoras,

¹⁷ Horace Od 3.23-24; cf. Catull 64.6, Barié VGL 27. A Greek example: Hes Op 682-86.

¹⁸ Segal TC 441; "aliud enim ἐπ' οὐδὲν μέλλον ad nullam rem futuram infinite dictum, quam finite ad eorum, quae futura sunt, nihil. Quorum alterum est: ad nihil, si quid futurum est: alterum: ad nihil, quod est futurum" (G.Herrmann, quoted in Müller SA 95).

Parallels for the idea of man coming to nothingness: Soph El 999f: *δαίμων δὲ τοῖς μὲν*

who reckons justice among the human τέχναι (Plato Prot 321cff; Jens AI 301, Gundert GGM 31). The impotence of human τέχναι may be connected with the cause of transgressions of justice: man's daring (τόλμας χάριν – 371). The fundamental problem is that here the word τόλμα implies transgression of limits but also refers to the daring necessary to institute order. Thus, when the chorus criticizes man's τόλμα, it essentially criticizes a fundamental aspect of man. But then the distinction between the citizen and the scapegoat seems to get blurred. The prayer: "May the transgressor never think my thoughts" (374) may not only indicate the distance from the enemy of city and hearth, but also the horror which man experiences before himself, as the most awesome of all beings (Rohdich A 76).

This brings us to the second separation regarding justice, the seemingly flawless opposition between νόμους χθονός and θεῶν τ' ἔνορκον δίκαν. This points to the opposition between the laws of the city and divine justice (Coleman RCA 9-10, Alexanderson SCA 89).¹⁹ It would seem that the conflict between Creon's human laws and Antigone's divine law is unequivocally indicated—but this separative conclusion would be rash. First of all it is not impossible that the chorus is equating both aspects of justice. Then it would still accept Creon's identification of state law and divine justice (Hester SU 27). A much more important point is that the word χθών is fundamentally ambiguous, and as such a focus of transformations. It is not merely the soil of the city, but also refers to the highest goddess, Ga (338). Finally, it is the place where the dead belong. If the latter sense is accepted we are confronted with a completely reversed opposition. The laws of the earth, i.e. those of burial, are opposed to the laws which are sworn before the gods, as Creon has done (cf. ὄρχιος – 305). Thus both laws belong to the divine sphere, which does not preclude their belonging to the human sphere as well.²⁰ We suggest that the ambiguity of both readings should be accepted.

The doubts surrounding the separative power of man with respect to justice return when human insight is at stake. In this *stasimon* a certain emphasis is put on the necessity of excessive mobility for human intelligence, which is clear from words like περιφραδής (347), ὀχμάζεται (or

εὐτυχεῖ καθ' ἡμέραν, ἡμῖν δ' ἀπορρεῖ καπὶ μηδὲν ἔρχεται – cf. El 1165f., Soph Fr 941 R, Eur Hec 622, Eur Fr 536N2.

¹⁹ We cannot be sure which verb should connect both aspects. Goheen's defence of 368 παρείρων (ISA 141) deserves attention in spite of its forcing of grammar.

²⁰ For the second translation see Ehrenberg 77, Segal TC 170-72, Goheen ISA 55, Lesky HG 88, Müller SA 86. Hölderlin translated νόμους χθονός as "die Gesetze der Erd."

ὑπάζεται (351), φρόνημα (354), ξυμπέφρασται (363), Σοφόν τι τὸ μαχανόεν τέχνας (364-65). To the Greeks all these words were expressions of *metis*, the changeful, adaptable power of the polyp (Thgn 215-18) and the fox. In its opposition to the powers of chaos man's intelligence was felt to be necessarily polymorphous, equivocal, inverting, tortuous (Detienne/Vernant RI 55). The devices of man's intellect, like nets,²¹ the bit, the rein and the yoke, are therefore powerful, but due to this employment of power also dangerous (RI 178-202).

In an interconnected culture it is also ominous when man is said to be capable of teaching himself to acquire insight (356)— as ominous as the near-absence of the gods. The most ambiguous phrase is employed when Sophocles says that man's intelligent contraptions are ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' (365). This not only means "beyond expectation," but also "beyond hope": it exceeds the limits that could be wished for. The fundamental ambiguity of hope will be abundantly underscored in the other *stasima*. Here Sophocles has confined himself to a dark undertone.

This brings us to the first lines of the *stasimon* confronting us with the key word of the tragedy. Contrary to separative orthodoxy we hold that the word δεινός should be translated in such a way that the ambiguity of power, instituting as well as undermining civilization, is made clear. We disagree with the separatism of Jebb's comment on τὰ δεινὰ: "not 'dread,' nor 'able,' but 'wonderful'" (A 70), a translation separating the positive aspect of the word from the negative. Certainly, the word *deinos* points to man's cleverness, his awe-inspiring abilities, but it should not be forgotten that it also points to his terrible power, which is horrifying, exceeding all limits. Perhaps the translation "awesome" renders this ambiguity satisfactorily. It refers both to what is worthy of respect and reverence, and what causes dread and is appalling. In this respect we follow a long tradition. In 1801 Hölderlin translated *deinos* as "gewaltig," in 1804 he changed it to "ungeheuer," a word which interpreters link up with "unheimlich."²² In the latter sense it points to the ambiguously tragic ground structure of human life (Friedländer PTD 61). As far as we know, the first to point out the ambiguity of *deinos* in an article in English was Knapp in 1916.²³ This ambiguity defies not only the separative point of view but also the harmonizing one, since man re-

²¹ RI 51. Compare Clytaemnestra's perverted use of a net in Aes Ag 1380ff.

²² Friedländer PTD 58-59, Gundert GGM 24, Müller A 89. Cf. 243, 1046, OT 545, OC 806, Aes Pr 59.

²³ "One of the evidences of man's *deinotes* is the fact that ἀνεμόεν φρόνημα [...] ἐδιδάξατο (353-55). In themselves these words might well involve praise[...]But the other side of the thought, that man's *deinotes* may well be an evil thing[...]comes to the fore again in 365-375" (PIA 303).

mains τὸ δεινόν and will never be able to harmonize order and excessive power. It is well known that in the opening words of this *stasimon* the choral song of Aeschylus' *Choephoroe* (Ch 585ff.) is echoed. In that song δεινὰ means "dreadful," referring to human, particularly feminine, passion. Jebb sees no more than a vague resemblance between the two *stasima* and believes Aeschylus' song is 'limited' to the violence of human passion. But Sophocles' *stasimon* refers to the inevitability of human passion as well, and hence points in equal measure to the dreadfulness of human power.

Our reading is supported by the fact that in these lines man is introduced in the neuter, as if dehumanized, as a portent, a τέρας or *monstrum* (Burton CST 97). Besides, it is only in our reading that the *stasimon*'s emphasis on the limitations of human power, for example death, can be accounted for. The separative translation is forced to confine itself to the first part of the *stasimon*, in which man's greatness is praised (Friedländer PTD 60, Gundert GGM 28). The harmonizing point of view, as exemplified in Rohdich's interpretation, fully accounts for the ambiguity of man's *deinotes*. Rohdich refers to man's inevitable acceptance of political rule and to the individual's desire, no less compelling, to overstep the limits of the polis. Nevertheless he interprets the *stasimon* in a harmonizing sense. In his view the citizens' distress is sublimated in confronting them with the downfall of individualism. Being confronted with the impossibility of boundless individuality, the tragedy presents life with the possibility to save itself, in the realization that it can only be political (A 77). The implication is that Antigone's undermining of the polis in the end is beneficial to the state (A 78). The tragedy has acted as a ritual catharsis of the human desire for the impossible, and hence as an expedient for the maintenance of the city.

Though this control of ambiguity is certainly one aspect of the tragedy, a harmonizing point of view like Rohdich's tends to forget that, despite the destruction of the awesome heroes, political man remains *to deinon*. Rohdich seems to suggest that in Greek cosmology *deinotes* can finally be domesticated by prudence, which would separate man from his fundamentally tragic awesomeness.

Sophocles' idea of man is diametrically opposed to that of the philosophers of his time. Thinkers like Archelaus and Protagoras were confident that reality could be arranged in such a way that separated categories would emerge. Archelaus for example was proud of man's intelligence which had "separated" him from his animal predecessors (διεπρίθησαν – DK 60A 4 par 6). As Friedländer remarks (PTD 62), this separatism does not account for the dark face of *deinotes*. Separative phi-

losophy rejects the connection between *poros* and *techne* on one side and *deinotes* on the other, which is characteristic of tragedies like Aeschylus' *Prometheus*.²⁴

Regarding the contextual meaning of the first *stasimon* we encounter a second variant of separatism. Müller essentially agrees that τὸ δεινόν is an ambiguous word (SA 83), but he keeps making separations in its use. He separates the chorus's conscious meaning from its subconscious meaning, which is supposed to equal the author's intention, and he distinguishes the applicability of the concept to Creon from its applicability to Antigone. Consciously the chorus applies the concept to Antigone and not to Creon, whereas in reality the dangerous aspects of hubris would be applicable to Creon only and not to Antigone, because transgression of limits is a characteristic not fitting Antigone at all (SA 85). According to Müller Antigone is essentially δεινή in an "unambiguously admirable sense" (SA 86).

We doubt the philosophical separation between a primary meaning which is nothing but appearance and a secondary meaning which would show Sophocles' true opinion, a separation which would undermine some of the tragedy's fundamental ambiguities. It also implies that the chorus is the voice of mediocrity. It is paradoxical that these hidebound bourgeois should at the same time articulate the deepest insights into human nature (Heidegger HHI 121). But more importantly, much of the tragic significance of the *Antigone* is lost if the positive and the negative aspects of *deinotes* are separated and distributed over Antigone and Creon respectively. Whoever considers Antigone a guiltless victim, i.e. whoever thinks that the chorus is wrong with respect to her, forces upon himself the conclusion that Antigone does not belong to the essence of man, in so far as it is characterized as awesome (Heidegger HHI 116). The same is true for Creon: if his acts lack positive *deinotes*, he has to be excluded from the tragic realm of human action. We prefer to consider both characters tragically relevant and ominous vehicles of power. It is not accidental that Antigone is greeted by the chorus as a τέρας (376), a dangerous portent, and Creon as using his μῆτις (158), the dangerous power of intelligence.

²⁴ δεινὸς γὰρ εὐρεῖν καὶ ἀμηχάνων πόρον (for he is wondrous clever at finding a way even out of desperate straits) (Pr 59).

6.2. The second *stasimon*

Εὐδαίμονες οἷσι κακῶν ἄγευστος αἰών·
 οἷς γὰρ ἄν σεισθῇ θεόθεν δόμος, ἅτας
 585 οὐδὲν ἐλλείπει γενεᾶς ἐπὶ πληθος ἔρπον·
 ὅμοιον ὥστε ποντίας
 οἶδμα, δυσπνόοις ὅταν
 590 Θρήσσησιν ἔρεβος ὕφαλον ἐπιδράμη πνοαῖς,
 κυλίνδει βυσσόθεν
 κελαινὰν θῖνα καὶ δυσάνεμοι
 στόνῳ βρέμουσιν ἀντιπληγες ἄκται.

Blest are they whose days have
 not tasted of evil. For when a
 house hath once been shaken
 from heaven, there the curse fails
 nevermore, passing from life to
 life of the race; even as, when the
 surge is driven over the darkness
 of the deep by the fierce breath
 of Thracian sea-winds, it rolls up
 the black sand from the depths,
 and there is a sullen roar from
 wind-vexed headlands that front
 the blows of the storm.

Ἄρχαῖα τὰ Λαβδακιδᾶν οἴκων ὀρώμαι
 595 πῆματα φθιμένων ἐπὶ πῆμασι πίπτοντ',
 οὐδ' ἀπαλλάσσει γενεὰν γένος, ἀλλ' ἐρείπει
 θεῶν τις, οὐδ' ἔχει λύσιν.
 Νῦν γὰρ ἐσχάτας ὅπερ
 600 ῥίζας ὁ τέτατο φάος ἐν Οἰδίπου δόμοις,
 κατ' αὖ νιν φοινία
 θεῶν τῶν νερτέρων ἀμᾶ κόνις,
 λόγου τ' ἄνοια καὶ φρενῶν Ἑρινύς.

I see that from olden time the
 sorrows in the house of the
 Labdacidae are heaped upon the
 sorrows of the dead; and
 generation is not freed by
 generation, but some god strikes
 them down, and the race hath no
 deliverance. For now that
 hope of which the light had been
 spread above the last root of the
 house of Oedipus - that hope, in
 turn, is brought low - by the
 blood-stained dust due to the
 gods infernal, and by folly in
 speech, and frenzy at the heart.

Τεάν, Ζεῦ, δύναμιν τίς ἀν-
 605 δρῶν ὑπερβασία κατᾶσχι,
 τὰν οὔθ' ὕπνος αἰρεῖ ποθ' ὁ πάντα κηλῶν,
 οὔτ' ἐτέων ἄκματοι
 μῆνες, ἀγήρως δὲ χρόνῳ δυνάστας
 κατέχεις Ὀλύμπου
 610 μαρμαρόεσσαν αἴγλαν.
 Τό τ' ἔπειτα καὶ τὸ μέλλον
 καὶ τὸ πρὶν ἐπαρχέσει
 νόμος ὅδ'· οὐδὲν ἔρπει
 θνατῶν βιότῳ πάμπολύ γ' ἐκτὸς ἅτας.

Thy power, O Zeus, what human
 trespass can limit? That power
 which neither Sleep, the all-
 ensnaring, nor the untiring
 months of the *years* can master;
 but thou, a ruler to whom time
 brings not old age, dwellest in
 the dazzling splendour of
 Olympus. And through the
 future, near and far, as through
 the past, shall this law hold good:
 Nothing that is vast enters into
 the life of mortals without a
 curse.

615 Ἄ γὰρ δὴ πολὺπλαγκτος ἐλ-
 πὶς πολλοῖς μὲν ὄνασις ἀνδρῶν,

For that hope whose wanderings
 are so wide is to many men a

πολλοῖς δ' ἀπάτα κουφονόων ἐρώτων·
 εἰδοῖσι δ' οὐδέν ἔρπει,
 520 πρὶν πυρὶ θερμῷ πόδα τις προσάουσι.
 Σοφίᾳ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ
 κλεινὸν ἔπος πέφανται·
 τὸ κακὸν δοκεῖν ποτ' ἐσθλὸν
 τῷδ' ἔμμεν, ὅτῳ φρένας
 θεὸς ἄγει πρὸς ἄταν·
 525 πράσσει δ' ὀλιγοστόν χρόνον ἐκτὸς ἄτας.

comfort, but to many a false lure
 of giddy desires; and the
 disappointment comes on one
 who knoweth nought till he burn
 his foot against the hot fire. For
 with wisdom hath some one given
 forth the famous saying, that evil
 seems good, soon or late, to him
 whose mind the god draws to
 mischief; and but for the briefest
 space doth he fare free of woe.

586: ποντίας: D: ποντίας ἀλδς 588: Θρήσσησιν: J: Θρήσσαισιν 591: δυσάνεμοι: D:
 δυσανέμωι 595: φθιμένων: J: φθιτῶν 600: δ τέτατο. We follow J and D. DM:
 ἐτέτατο 602: κόνις: D: κοπίς 604: δύναμιν: J,D: δύνασιν 606: πάντα κηλῶν: J:
 πάντ' ἀγρεύων 607/8: ἐτέων ἄκματοι μῆνες. We follow D. J: θεῶν ἄκματοι μῆνες; DM:
 ἀκάματοι θεῶν μῆνες 616: δύνασις: D: ὄνησις 625: ὀλιγοστόν. D, J: ὀλίγιστον

The orthodox view can only be maintained in the light of the meaning of the second *stasimon* if some extreme separations are carried through. First of all it has to separate the second *stasimon* from the first, because taken together the second *stasimon* confirms the ominous undertones which we have detected in the first *stasimon* where separatists only spoke of a song in praise of man. Furthermore—and this is a problem of contextual relevance—the separatists who believe that the tragedy is concerned with one tragic individual, Antigone in her unimpaired identity, have to reject the opinion of the chorus that the polluted and polluting power of the whole family of the Labdacids is at stake. Müller, for example, is convinced that this *stasimon* does not reflect the poet's opinion, because Antigone is connected with the crimes of the Labdacids in the manner of Aeschylus (SA 135). We shall discuss these problems while assessing the importance of the six cosmological categories in this second *stasimon*.

In the first *stasimon* nature was said to be powerful, but man is glorified as being able to subdue nature by employing even more awesome power and thus able to establish order. In this *stasimon* the picture undergoes a complete reversal—but this does not detract from the glorification of man in the first *stasimon*. It is a separative prejudice that conflicting sides of cosmological truth cannot exist together). In the second *stasimon* the *deinotes* of nature is revealed in all its awesome power. Again we are confronted with the three fundamental elements of inanimate nature: the sea is moved by the wind and smashes against the land. The sea in particular reveals a new and unsuspected character. We are not merely confronted with its navigable surface, but have to face the darkness of the deep

(Nethercut VP 62). This ἔρεβος ὕφαλον can be translated as "submarine abyss." This abyss is the centre of a clash of terrible forces: rushing over (ἐπιδράμη – 589), rolling up (κυλίνδει – 590), striking with evil winds (587, 589, 591).²⁵

Apart from the comparison with the Labdacids, this picture of unrestricted movement points out the confusing power of nature. The evil winds from Thrace (in Greek eyes a marginal and dangerous country) confuse the distinction between sea and sky (Detienne/Vernant RI 154-55). The waves of the sea play havoc with cosmic order: the black sand which should be at the bottom of the sea is stirred up,²⁶ just like the sea buffets the capes and the winds have become "un-winds" (δυσάνεμοι – 591). In the first antistrophe a similar perversion takes place; the dust which belongs to the sphere below comes to cover the light which naturally should be in the region above (cf. Segal TC 172-73, 197).²⁷

It is important to emphasize that this transgressing power of nature is not confined to nature *sensu stricto*. The dangerous ἔρεβος ὕφαλον is not only the submarine abyss, it is also cognate with primeval chaos.²⁸ The natural forces of chaotic transgression also spread to the human sphere: they make new sorrows fall on old ones (πίπτοντ' – 595), a god strikes down (ἐρείπει – 596) the race. A further transformation occurs when human hope is revealed as 'roaming wide' (πολύπλαγκτος – 615), a nautical metaphor, comparing hope to a mariner traversing unknown seas.²⁹ But here it is not, as in the first *stasimon*, man who conquers the sea. Man is overwhelmed by hope, the counterpart of man's *deinotes* in the first *stasimon* (cf. Müller SA 139).

At first sight the second *stasimon* seems to make a clear separation between the godless forces of nature in the first strophe and antistrophe, and the restfulness, lightness and loftiness of the divine power of Zeus in the second strophe (cf. Goheen ISA 58), as is Müller's opinion. In his eyes the divine power of Zeus should be opposed to the fierce storms representing the "blasphemous will of man" (SA 137). But this separa-

²⁵ Cf. OC 1240-41: πάντοθεν βόρειος ὥς τις ἀπὸ κυματοπλήγῃ χειμερία κλονεῖται (as some cape that fronts the North is lashed on every side by the waves of winter).

²⁶ Kamerbeek A 118: "Ἐρεβος ὕφαλον[...]refers to the dark water of the deep-sea, which stirred up by the storm, swiftly passes over[...]the normal surface of the sea."

²⁷ This sequence of natural perversions forms an inversion of the dust storm as beheld by the guard: here the dust covers the sky, another upheaval of categories – 417ff.

²⁸ Detienne/Vernant RI 155: "Tout ce qui, d'une façon ou d'une autre, unit ou confond des éléments faits pour demeurer disjoints et séparés, s'apparente ainsi à certains égards au chaos primordial."

²⁹ Jebb A 118, Easterling SSA 153. cf. Pind Ol 12.6f.: αἶ γε μὲν ἀνδρῶν πόλλ' ἄνω, τὰ δ' αὖ κάτω φεύδῃ μεταμῶνια τάμνοισαι κυλίνδοντ' ἐλπίδες (At least, the hopes of men are oft tossed up and down, ploughing a sea of vain deceits).

tion between confused humanity and serene divinity contradicts the fact that the elemental forces of nature are as divine as Zeus (cf. Aes Sep 758-61, Easterling SSA 145). Certainly Zeus is a quiet power of eternal order, but at the same time he represents disorder.

There is no doubt that the quiet power of Zeus forms a contrast with the riotousness of nature (Coleman RCA 13), and is contrasted with man's frailty as well. The fact that Zeus never sleeps points to two categorial distinctions. First of all it indicates his super-human insight.³⁰ Secondly, the power to resist sleep indicates immortality.³¹ This distinction returns in the image of the months. Contrary to mortal man, the life of the immortals is not worn away by the months of the year (Jebb A 117, Rohdich A 112). The second *stasimon*'s all-pervasive emphasis on the gods should be considered a more or less ironical comment on the near-absence of the gods in the first *stasimon*. The picture of man's autonomy is not discarded by this reversal, but shown in its divided nature: the oppositions do not cancel each other out.

But Zeus is not the only divine power mentioned in this *stasimon*. By transformation, the opposition between Zeus and nature is also the opposition between Zeus and the nether gods (θεῶν τῶν νεπτέρων – 602). It would be a separative error to believe that *ate* and *Erinyes* are mere designations of human blindness and ruin. *Ate* is at the same time the divine power which causes unhappiness, the blindness which leads to unhappiness, the crime, its consequences and its punishment (Gernet RPG 321-22). *Erinyes* is the evil spirit of revenge, the divine curse of the race³² which has taken possession of Antigone (Rohdich A 110). These powers cannot be confined to the human sphere, as separatism tends to confine them—they are divine confusing powers of the dark (cf. Aes Ag 462, Hom Il 9.571, 19.87ff., Od 15.234).

But in interconnected cosmologies in general, and in Greek cosmology in particular, gods are not individuals representing clear-cut oppositions. Gods may represent divergent and even opposing powers. There is no reason to suppose that Zeus has nothing to do with the confusion of the mortal race, particularly with the downfall of the Labdacids. In the second line of the play Antigone herself ascribes the evils befalling the house of Oedipus to Zeus. It is quite possible that Zeus is the god who is tearing

³⁰ Detienne/Vernant RI 113: "Par la metis qui lui est intérieure, le dieu souverain se maintient en constant état de vigilance, [...] il n'est plus pour lui d'attaque ni de ruse, plus de metis qui puissent le surprendre."

³¹ Hesiod calls sleep the brother of death (Th 212); cf. Rohdich A 112.

³² Cf. Polyneices on his banishment from Thebes in OC 1298-99: ὦν ἐγὼ μάλιστα μὲν τὴν σὴν ἐρινὺν αἰτίαν εἶναι λέγω (And of this I deem it most likely that the curse on thy house is the cause). See also OC 1434, Od 11.280, Pind Ol 2.38.

the Labdacids apart (ἐρείπει - 596). And the eternal law laid down in the second strophe, that nothing vast enters the life of mortals without ruin, is proclaimed immediately after the description of Zeus' loftiness. Again we have to guard ourselves against the separative illusion that the *Antigone* is a tragedy of clear-cut oppositions between the human and the divine, disorder and order, lower gods and higher gods. The fact that Zeus occupies the glittering heights of the Olympus does not rule out that he is a terrible power of confusion for mortals at the same time.

The upheaval of nature in this *stasimon* mirrors the fate of one important social relation, that of belonging to a house, to an extended family (δόμος - 584, 600, γένος - 596, γενεᾶς - 585, cf. 596, Λαβδακιδᾶν οἴκων - 594). We are confronted with a powerful transformation from nature to the family. The collapse of the house of Oedipus is also a dangerous encounter with nature. For example, the sand washed up from the depths of the sea (591) returns as the dust smothering the Labdacids (603).³³ And the 'metaphor' of the tossed sea represents the upturning of this house (Kamerbeek A 117). The dust offered to protect the dead will eventually cover the last of the Labdacids, while the hopes and desires which bring down the house of the Labdacids are comparable to Thracian gales.³⁴

In this *stasimon* ruin is not confined to one generation, but affects all succeeding generations (Jebb A 112). This underlines the fact that not one individual heroine but the extended family is what the text is about. This can also be inferred from the emphasis laid on the fact that Antigone is the last root of the house of Oedipus, its only hope of continuing the race.³⁵ The implication is that Antigone shares in all the awesome aspects of her family, among which the horrible transgressions and pollutions are most notable. Therefore separatism, wishing the tragedy to centre on one immaculate heroine finds itself forced to separate this *stasimon* from Sophocles' real thought, which is supposed to run contrary to the Aeschylean failures of the chorus (Müller SA 137). The unattractiveness of this point of view, which would undermine the whole tragic meaning of Antigone's being the last of the Labdacids and the sister/daughter of that model of ambiguity, Oedipus, is evident.

³³ Cf. Goheen ISA 61, Benardete RSA II.27.

³⁴ Rohdich A 121: "der Trieb, dessen Urgewalt das Gleichnis vom Thrakersturm vergegenwärtigte, dem Göttlichen nahe- und gleichzukommen, ist dessen Ausdruck in der menschlichen Natur und ebenso göttlich wie die Grenze, die seine Erfüllung verhindert."

³⁵ Jebb A 114: "The ἐσχάτη ῥίζα of the family is the last remaining means of propagating it. A light of hope (φῶς) was 'spread above' this 'last root,'—as sunshine above a plant,—because it was hoped that the sisters would continue the race." For the connection between "root" and "procreation" cf. Pind Ol 2.46: ὄθεν σπέρματος ἔχοντα ῥίζαν.

At first sight it may seem that this *stasimon* represents a clear-cut division between the gods as immortal and human beings as mortal. Of course that opposition is there, but there is more to be said. The main problem is the intermediate position of corpses, between life and death. As we have seen in chapter four, the Greeks considered unburied corpses dangerous sources of pollution. The sprinkling of dust was a ritual endeavouring to exorcize the pollution by separating the body from the civilized sphere and confining it to its proper realm, the earth. In this *stasimon* we are confronted with a breach of this ritual, resulting in even more pollution and danger. Here the dust is not a separative power, but has become an active, lethal force killing the living instead of saving them. This ambiguity shines through in the ambivalent meaning of the adjective *φονία* (601) which does not only refer to the drinking of blood by the dust, but also to the dust's active power of shedding blood (Rohdich A 109). The perversion of the ritual of dust sprinkling has the horrible result that Polyneices' corpse does not only retain its polluting power, but extirpates the whole race of the Labdacids. The burier Antigone becomes the victim of the lethal dust.

Another apparently clear-cut division from the first *stasimon* which collapses in the second is the distinction between divine justice and human justice. Whereas in the first *stasimon* we are warned that man will now turn to evil, now to good, depending upon his respecting divine and human justice, here we are confronted with the fact that man tends to confuse good and evil (622). The divine law loses nothing of its divineness, but reveals itself as being humanly unbearable. It is not only human arrogance (*ὑπερβασία* – 605) which elicits divine wrath—the gods also punish that which is great. The eternal law is, that nothing that is vast enters human life without ruin (613-14). Here the law of talion has not been attenuated by the idea that human transgressions are rightly punished. We are confronted with the raw jealousy of the gods with respect to all that is great in human life (Jebb A 118). Divine justice is at the same time human disorder.

The same holds true for human insight, which in the first *stasimon* seemed to be a guarantee of prosperity and justice. Here another divine law is mentioned, that man is brought to blindness by the gods, and so sooner or later confuses good and evil (622: *τὸ καχὸν δοκεῖν ποτ' ἐσθλὸν*). The ambiguity which seemed to hover around the expression *ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδα* in the first *stasimon* is now fully developed. The fundamental problem for man's insight is that it is the expression of an excessive power and therefore tends to undermine its own order. This excessive power is the power of hope.

There is no insight outside hope, but hope is ambiguous, it wanders

wide (615). It brings help, and then brings man to ruin. Hope is connected with desire (ἐρώτων - 617), which means that propitious and harmful elements are inseparable in it.³⁶ It enables man to live, but also makes him forget all boundaries. The hope and desire which are indispensable for maintaining human life are the same forces which, assisted by the gods,³⁷ deceive man and bring him to ruin.³⁸ When Sophocles speaks of man being deceived by "lighthearted desires" (κουφονόων ἐρώτων - 617) he ironically points back to the first *stasimon*, where birds, not man, were called light-hearted (κουφονόων - 342). Man's insight has become like that of the animals he dominated by his insight in the first *stasimon*. The chorus says that man knows nothing before he burns his foot (618-19). The wisdom (Σοφία - 620) which teaches that man confuses evil with good is paradoxical: it is the wisdom that man knows nothing, but can only live by pretending to know the truth.

When we turn to the contextual relevance of the second *stasimon* we must emphasize that for a separatist like Müller, in reality Antigone has nothing to do with the curse of the Labdacids, being as she is an immaculate isolated individual (SA 135). Yet Müller maintains that Creon's blindness is not intentional either, because he is not a protagonist and because his blindness comes out of himself, not from a curse (SA 140). We will argue against this point of view when we discuss the episodes. Here we will confine ourselves to repeating that Müller is forced to separate both Antigone and Creon from the sphere of tragedy. It is true that in this *stasimon* Sophocles is constantly alluding to Aeschylus' *Septem*. The comparison of the downfall of the Labdacids to the marine gales is repeated (Sep 669-71, cf. 758ff), as is the curse from generation to generation (Sep 740-41) and the importance of the Erinyes (Sep 70, 699-700, 623, 791, 886-87, 977, 988). In the *Septem* the chorus also emphasizes that the house of the Labdacids is destroyed root and branch (πρυμνόθεν - Sep 1056) by Polyneices' perverted burial by An-

³⁶ For the connection of hope and desire with ruin, cf. Aes Pers 94-100 (107-14), and the speech of Diodotus in Thyc 3.45.5: ἡ τε ἐλπίς καὶ ὁ ἔρως ἐπὶ παντί, ὁ μὲν ἡγοούμενος, ἡ δ' ἐφεπομένη, καὶ ὁ μὲν τὴν ἐπιβουλὴν ἐκφροντίζων, ἡ δὲ τὴν εὐπορίαν τῆς τύχης ὑποτιθεῖσα, πλεῖστα βλάπτουσι, καὶ ὅτα ἀφανὴ κρίσσω ἐστὶ τῶν ὁρωμένων δεινῶν. (Hope and desire persist throughout and cause the greatest calamities—one leading and the other following, and the other suggesting that it will be successful—invisible factors, but more powerful than the terrors that are obvious to our eyes).

³⁷ Cf. Theognis 403ff.: ἀνὴρ..., ὅτινα δαίμων πρόφρων ἐς μεγάλῃν ἀμπλακίην παράγει, καὶ οἱ ἔθῃκε δοκεῖν, ἃ μὲν ἡ κακά, ταῦτ' ἀγάθ' εἶναι εὐμαρέως, ἃ δ' ἂν ἡ χρήσιμα, ταῦτα κακά. (a man, [...], only to be misled into great wrong-doing by a favouring spirit, which so easily maketh what is evil seem to him good, and what is good seem evil).

³⁸ Rohdich A 118: "der Trieb, der ihn ins Unheil stürzt, ist derselbe, der ihm Nutzen bedeutet. Im Gang des menschlichen Lebens gibt es also einen Punkt, an dem der Charakter des Strebens, das immer das Edle will, sich ins Gegenteil verkehrt."

tigone. But far from indicating "Aeschyleische Fehltritte," these resemblances strengthen our conviction that Sophocles' conception of the extended family does not differ at all from that of Aeschylus (Lloyd-Jones JZ 111ff.). Müller's position becomes untenable once one realizes that Antigone herself agrees with the chorus in her emphasis on being a member of the cursed Labdacids (cf. e.g. 856).³⁹

In the harmonizing view as it is represented by Rohdich, the ambiguous status of families which are both too high and too low is excellently accounted for. Rohdich emphasizes the tragic nature of hope and desire as well, but we are again confronted with the problem we met in Rohdich's interpretation of the first *stasimon*: he separates the choral song from total tragic ambiguity. Though he is convinced that reckless desires are humanly inevitably, he maintains that they are channelled by the tragic performance. The effect of the tragedy would then be that the necessity of submission to political power and the inevitability of being prudent in a political way would become acceptable to the audience because it has been confronted with the horrible fate of prominent families which did not submit to political power.⁴⁰

The implication of Rohdich's harmonizing conception is that the tragedy leads to the *Bejahung* of the sacrifice of those who represent excessive hope and desire, such as Antigone and Creon. Indeed one aspect of the multiple tragic truth is that the chorus exhorts us to prudence, to reconciling the familial with the political. In that sense it is psychagogic indeed. But Rohdich maintains that according to the chorus this approximation to *eudaemonia* is humanly possible, which means that he separates certain aspects of tragic ambiguity from the utterances of the chorus, which besides the necessity of prudence emphasizes the inevitability of excess. What the chorus maintains is that despite the need to be prudent it is humanly impossible not to be imprudent. The chorus itself is unable to separate itself as the representative of prudence from man's hopeful and desiring nature. Therefore the audience is unable merely to welcome the sacrifice of excessive heroism. It knows that such excesses are part of themselves—just as the sacrificed heroes are part of themselves.

³⁹ Contra Müller's point of view Lloyd-Jones JZ 113ff. and Else MA 18 and *passim*, who speak of the importance in the play of the curse inherited from Oedipus.

⁴⁰ "Das Drama spricht durch die Exposition gefährdeter Grösse in raffinierter Mittelbarkeit das demokratische Lebensgefühl derer an, die sein Auditorium bilden. Die Eudaimonie des Heroischen erfährt ihre bürgerlich-politische Revision, die statt der Annäherung an den Glanz des Göttlichen die Beschränkung empfiehlt, in der das Risiko von Schuld und Leiden so gering wie möglich bleibt. Die psychagogische Kraft des Liedes stimuliert heimlich die Lebensform des 'kleinen Mannes', seine politisch egalisierte Existenz, seine gesellschaftlich geforderte Sophrosyne" (Rohdich A 121).

6.3. The third *stasimon*

Ἦρωσ ἀνίκατε μάχαν,
 Ἦρωσ, ὃς ἐν κτήμασι πίπ-
 τεις, ὃς ἐν μαλακαῖς παρει-
 αῖς νεάνιδος ἐννυχεύεις,
 785 φοιτᾷς δ' ὑπερπόντιος ἐν τ'
 ἀγρονόμοις αὐλαῖς·
 καὶ σ' οὔτ' ἀθανάτων
 φύξιμος οὐδείς οὔθ'
 ἀμερίων σέ γ' ἀνθρώ-
 790 πων, ὁ δ' ἔχων μέμνηεν.

Σὺ καὶ δικαίων ἀδίκους
 φρένας παρασπᾷς ἐπὶ λώ-
 βα· σὺ καὶ τόδε νεῖκος ἀν-
 δρῶν ζύναιμον ἔχεις ταράξας·
 795 νικᾷ δ' ἐναργῆς βλεφάρων
 ἥμερος εὐλέκτρον
 νύμφας, τῶν μεγάλων
 πάρεδρος ἐν ἀρχαῖς θεσ-
 μῶν· ἅμαχος γάρ ἐμπαί-
 800 ζει θεὸς Ἀφροδίτα

Love, unconquered in the fight,
 Love, who makest havoc of
 wealth, who keepest thy vigil on
 the soft cheek of a maiden; thou
 roamest over the sea, and among
 the homes of dwellers in the
 wilds; no immortal can escape
 thee, nor any among men whose
 life is for a day; and he to whom
 thou hast come is mad.

The just themselves have their
 minds warped by thee to wrong,
 for their ruin: 'tis thou that hast
 stirred up this present strife of
 kinsmen; victorious is the love-
 kindling light from the eyes
 of the fair bride; it is a power
 enthroned in sway beside the
 eternal laws; for there the
 goddess Aphrodite is working her
 unconquerable will.

789: σέ γ'. We follow J and D. DM: ἐπ'

799/800: ἐμπαίζει. D: ἐμπαίει

It is quite clear that both the separative and the harmonizing points of view have to isolate the *Antigone* from important aspects of tragic ambiguity in their various interpretations of the third *stasimon* on Eros. First of all there are separatists who make a division within the power of Eros. In the words of Jebb, they believe that the poet is merely saying how boundless is the range of love (Jebb A 146, cf. Burton CST 115). Thus Eros is separated from much of its ambiguous power which cannot be confined to the range of love. Another separation is made by Müller, who is convinced that in this *stasimon* a struggle between gods is rendered, but that such strife in the divine sphere is not Sophoclean. Therefore he argues that the real meaning of the song—the unity of divinity—should be separated from the surface errors of the chorus (SA 172). The real meaning, according to Müller, is the opposition between real human and divine justice on the one hand and mere human ruling on the other. In his view the power of Eros is no real divine power.⁴¹

⁴¹ "Aber freilich, die Macht des Eros wird von Sophokles durchaus nicht als eine jenseitige mit derjenigen des Hades auf eine Stufe gestellt. Der Hinweis auf die für

Though he acknowledges the full range of Eros, Müller nevertheless has to exorcize this elemental divine power from his interpretation in order to retain its orthodox character. And although Rohdich reduces Eros to erotic desire (A 142), he does account for the struggle between the order of polis and cosmos on the one hand and the power of Eros on the other. But his interpretation harmonizes this opposition again. In his view the laws of the city prove their superiority, despite the destruction of individuals, because they show the citiless position of those who are possessed by Eros. Rohdich's conclusion is that the chorus is praising *euboulia* and *sophrosyne* as measures against the disorder and dissent of Eros (A 143).

A single glance at the third *stasimon* is enough to show that once again we are confronted with an ironical reversal of the first choral song. As Kamerbeek remarks, in this song the power of Eros is first of all glorified by means of three pairs of cosmological contrasts (A 143). Eros reigns over beast and man,⁴² on sea and land, over mortals and immortals. Here it is not human power over nature which is emphasized but the dependence of nature, man and the gods on a source of power which makes havoc of all differentiation. The second *stasimon* proves a prelude to the third. It pointed to man's wide wandering hope, which is connected with the deceit of lighthearted desires (*ἐρώτων* – 617). In the third *stasimon* the theme of Eros is expanded to that of a universal force of desire, confusion and destruction. Therefore the confinement of Eros to erotic love is a separation which cannot account for the principal themes of the *stasimon*. Certainly Eros is connected with love: he spends the night on the soft cheeks of a girl⁴³ and shines from the eyes of the girl who is good in bed (*εὐλέκτρον* – 795). But if Eros is merely looked at from this aspect, it is enigmatic what he has to do with war (781, 799), and what he is doing in animate and inanimate nature.

The interconnected nature of Eros only becomes clear when we consider him first of all as a force which, besides erotic love, also involves the love for one's country and family (Benardete RSA II 46) and, secondly, as an even more fundamental power. Eros is typically a power which both underlies and undermines order. In this *stasimon* Eros has to be seen as an analogous to the Sumerian goddess Inanna and the Acca-

menschliche Moral zerstörende Wirkung des Eros erscheint nur im Fehlurteil des Chors'' (Müller SA 172).

⁴² Because of this systematic point of view the translation of *κτήματα* as cattle (e.g. Kamerbeek A 143) has to be preferred to the translation "possessions" (e.g. Jebb A 145, 256-57); cf. Chantraine SEK *passim*.

⁴³ For Eros as shining on cheeks cf. Phrynichus Fr 13Sn: *λάμπει δ' ἐπὶ πορφύρεαις παρῆσι φῶς ἔρωτος*.

dian goddess Ishtar, an interpretation supported by the fact that in Fragment 941 R Sophocles describes Cypris as just this primeval force: "Cypris is not Cypris alone, but is called by many names, it is Hades, it is immortal Violence, it is raging Frenzy, it is vehement Desire, it is Lamentation: in her is all activity, all restfulness, all that prompts to violence" (cf. Radt SF 215-16).

It is clear that in this fragment Sophocles considers Cypris to be more than just love. She is many-named like Dionysus in the fifth *stasimon*. She comprises all aspects of the power of desire and destruction.⁴⁴ As Euripides maintains, such forces are ineluctable for maintaining life and civic order (compare the city-building temperament of the first *stasimon*).⁴⁵ But at the same time they undermine it through their excessive nature.

This is what is emphasized in this *stasimon*. As a counterpart to man's mobility in the first *stasimon* here it is Eros who is exceedingly mobile. He fights, he falls on cattle (πίπτεις - 782), he roams over sea and land, as did man in the first *stasimon*, and he pursues mortals and immortals who have no escape (φύξιμος - 788), in sharp contrast to man's boast in the first song that he could escape all difficulties. Eros' undermining mobility is so all-pervasive that it effaces the distinctions of cosmological order. He is a force of fusion in breaking down the barriers between animals, men and gods, who are all dominated by him. This confusion of categories (ταράξας - 794) inevitably leads to ruin (792: λῶβη—a word which is akin to *ate*⁴⁶ and to *erinyes*.⁴⁷)

In the first *stasimon* the gods remain in the background, while the second *stasimon* praises Olympian Zeus, though the powers of confusion were not forgotten. In the third *stasimon* the position of the gods is revolutionized once more. Instead of Olympian Zeus on his glittering heights, now bewildering Eros occupies an unchallengeable position. Not only mortals are unable to escape him, even the immortals are impotent in the face of this power (786). Eros and Aphrodite are unconquerable (799), implying that a separative point of view with respect to the gods, as held

⁴⁴ Cf. Hymn Aphr 5. 2-5 and Soph Fr 941 R on Cypris: εἰσέρχεται μὲν ἰχθύων πλωτῶ γένει, ἔνεστι δ' ἐν χέρσῳ ἐν τετρασκελεῖ γονῇ, νωμᾶ δ' ἐν οἰωνοῖσι τοῦκείνης τερόν, ἐν θηροῖν, ἐν βροτοῖσιν, ἐν θεοῖς ἄνω.

"[Love] enters into the tribe of fish that swim the sea, and dwells in the four-footed creatures of the land; it is Love's pinion that is the guiding power among birds, among beasts, among men, among the gods above."

⁴⁵ Eur Medea 842-43, where the Erotai are described as: τᾶ σοφίᾳ παρέδρους..., παντοίας ἀρετᾶς ξυνεργούς (partners of wisdom working together to create every type of excellence).

⁴⁶ Examples in Sophocles: El 864: λωβητός, Phil 1103, Tr 538. λῶβη as a divine power: Tr 1031.

⁴⁷ In Ant 1074 the Erinyes are called λωβητῆρες.

by Müller, can only be maintained by denying Eros divine status and rejecting the opinions of the chorus.

Both separative points of view, the one confining Eros to love and the other denying his importance, collapse when we realize that all through the tragedy Eros is taken seriously in a non-sexual sense. In line 90 Ismene reproaches Antigone: "you are in love with the impossible" (ἀμηχάνων ἐρᾶς), and in line 220 the chorus maintains that nobody is mad enough to desire (ἐρᾶ) death. In the second *stasimon* we hear about general desires but not about specific ones: ἐρώτων (617). And finally in line 1336 Creon utters a great desire (ἐρῶ) which has nothing to do with love and is taken seriously by all participants in the tragedy.

The primeval nature of the power of Eros reveals itself in all its variety when we realize that he does not only confound nature, man and the gods, but also plays havoc with some major social ties. Eros haunts the houses (αὐλαῖς - 786) which in the first *stasimon* still promised protection to the mortals. Now it turns out that homes and families offer no refuge: Eros destroys the ties of blood (793-94) by that prototype of confusion, strife between kinsmen. Naturally Eros also presides over the fetters of love (783-84), the pleasures of the bed (795-97). And finally he is unconquerable in that major function of the city: making war (781). Again the problem is that desire is indispensable, but is a threat to civic order at the same time. This is also seen when we realize that Eros annuls the difference between mortals (ἀμερίων - 789)⁴⁸ and immortals (ἀθανάτων - 787) in the melting pot of desire.

In the categories of justice and insight it becomes evident that a harmonizing view of Eros is untenable. Eros is enthroned in sway beside the eternal laws (799-800), i.e. law and order thrive on his power, which nevertheless undermines them. On the one hand Eros upholds eternal justice, but on the other hand he pulls the righteous out of their tracks (παρασπᾶς - 792), a metaphor from horse racing, alluding to a charioteer jerking his horses out of their course (Jebb A 146). The oxymoron δικαίων ἀδίκους (791) points out the impossibility of separating the righteous from the unrighteous in the light of the power of desire. The same ambivalence surrounds Eros' place in the category of knowledge. On the one hand he makes himself clear (ἐναργής - 795), on the other he brings madness (μέμνηνεν - 790) to the minds of men (792). The conclusion must be that Eros exists as a tension between fusion and fission: his is the power which brings order and disorder at the same time. It is an inalienable part of the cosmos, which therefore is inwardly conflicting and unmanageable (Goheen ISA 136).

⁴⁸ The adjective ἀμέριος, cognate to ἐφήμερος, points to man's temporal and volatile nature. Cf. Aj 399.

That man can never set Eros aside as non-divine (Müller) or as tamed by civic order (Rohdich) becomes clear when we note Sophocles' remark in the *Trachiniae*: "Whoever offers resistance to Eros like the fist fighter with his hands is insane" (Trach 441-42). Man's tragic position is seen from the fact that not only neglecting Eros is insane, but that revering his power may lead to insanity as well.

If this interpretation of Eros is accepted the scope of the third stasimon's contextual relevance is wider than usually supposed. According to current interpretations, in this *stasimon* the chorus criticizes Haemon's excessive love for Antigone, resulting in his transgression of various boundaries, such as those between old and young, father and son, citizen and leader, marriage and kinship, life and death (cf. Rohdich A 139). If we consider Eros a primitive force, not merely sexual, the song may be pertinent to Antigone and Creon as well. Antigone's tragic position with respect to Eros is a double one. On the one hand she is excessively possessed by Eros in the non-sexual sense: by her love for her dead family and her love of death. On the other hand, due to these very desires she neglects Eros in the sexual sense (cf. Steiner As 258). Because Antigone is in love with the impossible she has to neglect her feminine *ergon* of procreation, and hence her familial duty of continuing the line of the Labdacids. In this respect she is Haemon's counterpart. Contrary to the girl in the *stasimon*, Antigone will only be embraced in death. The bed she will share with Haemon is her death bed.⁴⁹

Creon is also possessed by excessive non-sexual desires, and he shares Antigone's contempt for procreation, thereby trampling sexual Eros underfoot in favour of other desires. It is not until Eros is taken in this cosmological sense that the full ambiguity of the phrase νεῖκος ἀνδρῶν ξύναμνον (strife between men of the same blood) comes to the surface. In the first place it applies to the collision between Creon and Haemon. But it does not merely point to their erotic excesses—it refers to the inordinateness of all their passions. Because the pun on Haemon's name is accompanied by a pun on the name of Polyneices, it is reasonable to suppose that the role of Eros in the strife between kinsmen should be applied to the intrafamilial war between Polyneices and Eteocles as well (Segal TC 165, 190). Eros has fused the houses of the Labdacids and of Creon, not in procreation, but in a common fate of destruction. Aphrodite has played her unconquerable game.

⁴⁹ Vernant MTG 35: "Antigone n'a pas su[...]accueillir Eros". MTG 90: "elle méconnaît tout ce qui, dans l'univers, déborde ces domaines (de la *philia* et de la mort), en particulier ce qui relève de la vie et de l'amour. Les deux divinités qui sont invoquées par le chœur, Dionysus et Eros, ne condamnent pas seulement Créon[...]ils se retournent contre la jeune fille parce qu'ils expriment, jusque dans leurs liens avec la mort, les puissances de vie et de renouvellement."

6.4. The fourth *stasimon*

Ἦετλα καὶ Δανάας οὐράνιον φῶς
 945 ἀλλάξαι δέμας ἐν χαλκοδέτοις αὐλαῖς·
 κρυπτομένα δ' ἐν
 τυμβήρει θαλάμῳ κατεζεύχθη·
 καίτοι (καί) γενεᾷ τίμιος, ὦ παῖ, παῖ,
 950 καὶ Ζηνὸς ταμιεύεσκε γονὰς χρυσορύτους.
 Ἄλλ' ἃ μοιριδία τις δύνασις δεινά·
 οὔτ' ἄν νιν ὄλβος οὔτ' Ἄρης,
 οὐ πύργος, οὐχ ἀλίκτυποι
 κελαιναὶ νᾶες ἐκφύγοιεν.

Even thus endured Danaë in her
 beauty to change the light of day
 for brass-bound walls; and in that
 chamber, secret as the grave, she
 was held close prisoner; yet was
 she of a proud lineage, O my
 daughter, and charged with the
 keeping of the seed of Zeus, that
 fell in the golden rain. But
 dreadful is the mysterious power
 of fate; there is no deliverance
 from it by wealth or by war, by
 fenced city, or dark, sea-beaten
 ships.

Ζεύχθη δ' ὀξύχολος παῖς ὁ Δρύαντος,
 Ἡδωνῶν βασιλεύς, κερτομίους ὀργαῖς,
 ἐκ Διονύσου
 πετρώδει κατάφαρκτος ἐν δεσμῷ.
 Οὕτω τᾶς μανίας δεινὸν ἀποστάζει
 960 ἀνθρόν τε μένος. Κεῖνος ἐπέγνω μανίαις
 φάυων τὸν θεὸν ἐν κερτομίους γλώσσαις.
 Παύεσκε μὲν γὰρ ἐνθέους
 γυναικας εὐιδόν τε πῦρ,
 965 φιλαύλους τ' ἠρέθιζε Μούσας.

And bonds tamed the son of
 Dryas, swift to wrath, that king
 of the Edonians; so paid he for
 his frenzied taunts, when, by the
 will of Dionysus, he was pent in
 a rocky prison. There the fierce
 exuberance of his madness slowly
 passed away. That man learned
 to know the god, whom in his
 frenzy he had provoked with
 mockeries; for he had sought to
 quell the god-possessed women,
 and the Bacchanalian fire; and he
 angered the Muses that love the
 flute.

Παρὰ δὲ Κυανέων πελάγει διδύμας ἁλὸς
 ἄκται Βοσπόρῃαι ἰδ' ὁ Θρηκῶν (ἡϊῶν)
 970 Σαλμυδησσός, ἴν' ἀγχι(πολὶς Ἄρης
 δισσοῖσι Φινεΐδαις
 εἶδεν ἀρατὸν ἔλκος
 τυφλωθὲν ἐξ ἀγρίας δάμαρτος
 ἀλαδὸν ἀλαστόροισιν ὁμμάτων κύκλοις
 975 ἄτερθ' ἐγχείων, ὕφ' αἰματηραῖς
 χεῖρεσσι καὶ κερκίδων ἀκμαῖσιν.

And by the waters of the Dark
 Rocks, the waters of the twofold
 sea, are the shores of Bosporus,
 and Thracian Salmydessus; where
 Ares, neighbour to the city, saw
 the accurst, blinding wound dealt
 to the two sons of Phineus by his
 fierce wife, - the wound that
 brought darkness to those
 vengeance-craving orbs, smitten,
without swords, with her bloody
 hands, smitten with her shuttle
 for a dagger.

Κατὰ δὲ ταχόμενοι μέλειοι μελέαν πάθαν
 980 κλαῖον, ματρός ἔχοντες ἀνύμφευστον γονάν·

Pining in their misery, they
 bewailed their cruel doom, those

ἀ δὲ σπέρμα μὲν ἀρχαιογόνων
 ἄντας· Ἐρεχθειδᾶν,
 τηλεπόροις δ' ἐν ἄντροις
 τράφη θυέλλῃσιν ἐν πατρίαις
 Βορεᾶς ἄμιππος ὀρθόποδος ὑπὲρ πάγου
 θεῶν παῖς· ἀλλὰ κάπ' ἐκείνῃ
 Μοῖραι μακραίωνες ἔσχον, ὦ παῖ.

sons of a mother hapless in her
 marriage; but she traced her
 descent from the ancient line of
 the Erechtheidae; and in far-
 distant caves she was nursed
 amid her father's storms, that
 child of Boreas, swift as a steed
 over the steep hills, a daughter of
 gods; yet upon her also the grey
 Fates bore hard, my daughter.

968: Κυανέων. J: Κυανεῶν 968: πελάγει. D: Πελαγέων (πετρῶν) 969: ἰδ'. J: ἡδ'; D:
 ἡδ' 969: ἡιών, omitted by J and D. 975: ἄτερθ' ἐγγέων. J: ἀραχθέντων, D: ἀραχθέν
 ἐγγέων 984: θυέλλῃσιν, J, D: θυελλαισιν

The fourth *stasimon* has made interpreters despair because of its density, the discouraging variety of its stories, and the opacity of its contextual meaning. It is difficult to see what the three myths alluded to have in common. Danae was shut up in a dungeon by her father Acrisius because of an oracle which predicted that he would be killed by his daughter's son, but Zeus made her pregnant in the guise of a shower of gold. The main character in the second myth is the Thracian king Lycurgus who contested the religion of Dionysus, whereupon the god struck him with insanity and incarcerated him in an underground prison. The third story concerns Cleopatra, daughter of Boreas and Oreithyia, who married Phineus from Salmydessus and bore him two sons. But Phineus married another woman and locked Cleopatra up. The stepmother blinded the two boys and locked them up too.

Regarding the thematic meaning of the *stasimon* Jebb holds that the only similarity between the three examples cited is noble birth and cruel imprisonment (Jebb A 169). Linforth agrees with him, adding that amidst these principal themes snatches of subordinate melodies appear but remain undeveloped (Linforth AC 231-33). The *stasimon* is found to contain much more thematic relevance if it is approached in a structural way. Such an approach shows that the multiple significances of the song lie at a 'deeper' level than that of a comparison between the events in the three stories. The thematic relevance is to be found at the level of the mythemes, the systematically recurring elements from which the stories are built up. This approach shows that Segal is right when he maintains that the fourth *stasimon*, like the second and the third, is a parody of man's civilizing achievements in the first ode (TC 199).

The *stasimon*'s thematic relevance has also remained obscure because interpreters tend to compare the stories from the point of view of

separative cosmology, especially where the category of justice is concerned. To them it is incomprehensible that guiltless victims (Danae, Cleopatra and her sons) are thrown together with malefactors like Lycurgus. This separative point of view is inadequate, because it omits the interconnected nature of all these stories. The problem dealt with is not primarily one of justice and injustice, but one of transgression of cosmological boundaries. Whether these transgressions bring the transgressor too high or too low is less relevant. In all these stories confusion and transgression are paramount, justice and injustice secondary.

In all three stories we are confronted with a violation of man's relation to nature. The helplessness of man's civilizing abilities is emphasized where the force of fate is concerned—neither wealth nor war, nor bulwarks of ships avail (953-55). But a more important point is that Danae's position is highly equivocal. On the one hand her human status is violated by her being barred from procreation, on the other hand she trespasses against her human nature by being fertilized by a god. Her problematic state is heightened further when we realize that this god comes in the guise of a natural phenomenon. In short, Danae's position regarding nature and the gods is highly ambiguous—she exceeds humanity both in the natural and the divine direction. If we take the phrase "but dreadful is the mysterious power of fate" (951) to refer to Danae, we must assume that it is an allusion to the next episode in her life: in a repetition of her incarceration, she is locked up in a chest by her father and thrown into the sea. Again her position with respect to nature and culture is one of confusion (cf. Müller 215). It is reasonable to suggest that her father Acrisius shares this pattern of confusion of nature and culture. When the *stasimon* says that Danae was yoked by him (κατεζεύχθη - 948), ironically enough this terminology is a perversion of the normal yoking of maidens under their husbands' sway, and in an ominous way the yoking of animals from the first *stasimon* is repeated—but this time as a relationship between human beings; another intrusion of nature into civilization.

A similar mixture of nature and culture can be found in the place where Lycurgus reigned. He was king of the Edonians, a people in Thrace. The Thracian storms from the second *stasimon* were an earlier allusion to the marginal position of this country, close to nature in the northern wilds. According to tradition Thrace had become barren in horror at Lycurgus' crimes: he had struck his son Dryas dead and had mangled the corpse (Goheen ISA 70, Guépin TP 98). The transgressions characteristic of Lycurgus in this *stasimon* also verge on the natural. He is swift to wrath (ὀξύχολος - 955), he is ruled by his temperament (ὀργαῖς - 956; compare the same word in the first *stasimon*—another irony), he

is possessed by the awesomeness of madness (τᾶς μανίας δεινὸν - 959, another allusion to the ode on man), his wrath is "blooming" (ἀνθρόν - 960). Just like his counterpart Danae, the king's confused position is eventually embodied in his being locked up in a marginal place, a prison, specifically described as natural (958: πετρώδει - rocky). The impression that the second story is a variation on the first is confirmed when we realize that the image of the yoke returns. Now it is applied by the god Dionysus to the wild animal (i.e. subhuman) and king (i.e. superhuman) Lycurgus (Ζεύχθη - 955).

By now it should come as no surprise that the third story is another repetition of a confusion of nature and culture. Like her counterparts, Cleopatra combines subhuman aspects with divine ones. She was reared in natural caves at a great distance from Athenian civilization (983). Her father Boreas is a god, but as such he is a natural phenomenon as well: he is one of the winds. Cleopatra herself is a child of the gods (θεῶν παῖς - 986) and is like a horse (ἄμιππος - 985). Just as Danae's position between nature and the divine, and Lycurgus' position, both royal and animal, Cleopatra's marginality invites trouble. Her sons were blinded, again—and not accidentally so— in Thrace, by the waters of the dark rocks and Salmydessus. Salmydessus was ill-famed for the shipwrecks caused by its shallows, and the murderous tendency to robbery of its inhabitants (Kamerbeek A 169). It is no accident that the wild god Ares is connected with this country (Coleman RCA 21). The wildness of Thrace is reflected in the wild stepmother (ἄγρία - 973) of Cleopatra's sons.

Another episode of the myth, not alluded to by Sophocles, makes the repetition in the three stories complete. According to some versions Cleopatra's sons were half-buried in the earth by Phineus after they had been blinded (Goheen ISA 71, Winnington-Ingram SA 98), and according to the same sources Cleopatra was locked up by Phineus as well (cf. Müller SA 217).

The natural confusions by transformation in these stories are repeated in the confusing gods which preside over them, and again the three stories are mirrors of each other. This repetitive character of the *stasimon* has been stated quite well by Winnington-Ingram (SI 108): "Aphrodite is not mentioned in the Danae-stanza, but after the Third Stasimon her agency can perhaps be taken for granted; [She is the irresponsible power behind the god's sexual adventures with mortals]. Dionysus controls the action against Lycurgus quite specifically; [in the third myth] Ares stands in the forefront." All three deities are intimately connected in Greek mythology: Aphrodite is Dionysus' companion in joy and madness, Ares is Aphrodite's lover, Dionysus and Ares are rival or brother gods in

Thrace (Winnington-Ingram SI 109). Like Eros in the third *stasimon*, all deities are dispensers of desire and disorder and as such preside over each of the stories.

In all three cases transgressions of the boundaries between men and gods are at stake. That Danae held the seed of Zeus in trust may be considered exceeding the bounds of humanity (as Müller notes, the word ἔτλα in 944 not only points to her fortitude, but may also refer to daring – SA 216). Like the fate of Cleopatra's sons, her imprisonment can be considered a case of divine talion, which also operates in the case of Lycurgus, though here more emphasis is laid upon his reckless behaviour. He is punished because he hampered the "god-possessed women," and in doing so "touched" frenzy (φάυων—an expression which suggests polluting profanation, touching the untouchable) (Jebb A 172).

The repeated confusion of categories in the three stories is also seen in two important social ties, that of high birth and that of abnormal marriage. All three stories are about figures who are of high descent as well as in high positions in the polis, and who are subsequently destroyed, as models of the law of talion. Danae was 'of proud lineage' (949), but she fell a victim to fate. Lycurgus was a king who ended up yoked like an animal. Cleopatra was a child of the gods, but she was caught by the Moirae (986-87). In the story of Danae the role of her father Acrisius, king of Argos, should not be forgotten. It is the limits of his power (and not primarily Danae's) that are pointed out (Winnington-Ingram SI 101). Again a highly placed person in city and family is worsted by fate. The example of Lycurgus is that of a typical transgressing substitute for the polis who is thought to have brought barrenness on his country and who has to be killed as a scapegoat in order to purify the city (Apollod 3.5.1., Parker M 260).

In all cases the human function of procreation is hampered. Danae was barred from her feminine *ergon* by her father, Lycurgus killed his son, and Cleopatra and her sons are described in the terminology of ill-omened marriage (ἀνύμφευτον γονάν – 980, σπέρμα – 981, ἀρχαιογόνων – 981, ἀν-τας – 982). The sons were doomed because of the paradoxical 'unmarried seed of their mother' (ἀνύμφευτον γονάν)—a living paradox.⁵⁰ The final result is that Cleopatra proves unable to continue her old lineage (cf. Rohdich A 192).

Although death is not explicitly mentioned in the fourth *stasimon*, its shadow nevertheless hovers over all three myths. The confusion of death

⁵⁰ Ad 980 first scholium: κακόνυμφον γονήν διτι ἐπὶ κακῷ νυμφευθεῖσα δυστυχεῖς αὐτοὺς ἔτεκεν.

and procreation in the case of Danae is rendered in the contradiction in adjecto: *τυμβήρει θαλάμῳ* (947)—a tomb-like marriage chamber. From the tradition we know that Lycurgus' rocky prison was merely a preliminary to his violent death: he was torn asunder by wild horses (Apollod 3.5.1.), or wild panthers (Hyginus Fab 132). Finally, death appears in the 'withering away' of Cleopatra's sons; the word *κατὰ...ταχόμενοι* is preceded by the similar description of Niobe's stony fate (828). In all three cases there is a strong link between the themes of imprisonment and abnormal death and burial (Kirkwood SSD 221).

It would be a separative error to confine the working of the law of talion to the case of Lycurgus. As we have seen in the second *stasimon*, the gods do not only destroy what is unjust, they mow down all that is too great, and thereby touches on the untouchable, divine power. As in the second *stasimon*, cosmic law is not primarily just on a human level, it is awesome: 'Ἄλλ' ἂ μοιριδία τις δύνασις δεινὰ (951). Fate is the awesome power presiding over all three myths.

Only in the case of Lycurgus the function of insight is explicitly mentioned: he started with taunting words and ended with recognition (*ἐπέγνω* - 960—as usual without the implication of any improvement). But in all cases the terminology of light and darkness is conspicuous. Danae changed the celestial light (*οὐράνιον φῶς* - 944) for being hidden in a tomb (*χυπτομένα* - 946). Lycurgus tried to quell the Bacchanalian fire (*πῦρ*), for which he was punished with the darkness of prison. And finally their stepmother's weaving shuttle brought darkness to the eyes of Cleopatra's sons.⁵¹

The transgressions of Danae and those of Antigone have many parallels: both are in an abnormal position with respect to nature and the gods and are subsequently sent into wild nature. Both are near to the gods, both are barred from procreation by their relatives and both are imprisoned in a bridal chamber which is a room of death. The one tragic difference is that, contrary to Antigone, Danae was finally made pregnant and continued her lineage, whereas Haemon and Antigone are only united in the barrenness of death (Segal TC 182, Müller SA 216). But both women also show resemblances to Creon. He is in an abnormal position with respect to nature and the gods as well; at the end, he is expelled from the city and deprived of his offspring. He does not share Antigone's and Danae's fate in the rocky bridal chamber, but in some respects his fate is analogous to Acrisius': both sought to obstruct the

⁵¹ According to a tradition which is not mentioned by Sophocles, Phineus was in his turn blinded by the gods - cf. Goheen ISA 71-72.

power of passion (Winnington-Ingram SI 100-01, 103), both relied in vain on the paraphernalia of power like the fortress of the city (Goheen ISA 69, Rohdich A 196). The phrase 'ἄλλ' ἂ μοιριδία τις δύναις δεινά (951) can be applied to Danae and to Acrisius, to Antigone and to Creon. In its allusion to the undifferentiated power of awesomeness, it might serve as a motto for the whole tragedy.

The parallels between the case of Lycurgus and that of Creon are evident: both vaunt their power in the city and their independence from certain gods. Both are eventually destroyed by the gods in an *anagnorisis*. But the parallels to Antigone should not be overlooked. Like Antigone Lycurgus is yoked, like Antigone he is locked up in a stony prison, and like Antigone he is moved by madness and a quick temper. In so far as Antigone is unfeminine, Lycurgus' hampering of the godlike women may represent her nature as well as Creon's.

In the third myth Cleopatra's fate parallels that of Antigone in many respects. Far-away caves, contact with the divine sphere, marriage which is no marriage, high birth that ends miserably. But the parallels to Creon should not be overlooked. His marriage also turns out to be a non-marriage. Both his sons end miserably as well. When we hear of Phineus' two sons, we may be reminded of Eteocles and Polyneices as well as of Megareus and Haemon.

The idea that there is no contextual unity in the fourth *stasimon* (Waldock SD 116-19) turns out to be untenable, just as is the opinion that the only common feature between Antigone and the examples is noble birth and imprisonment. It is of the greatest importance to point out the non-ethical nature of the transgressions which are involved in the fourth *stasimon*: it is immaterial whether they are 'just' or 'unjust' or both. In interconnected cosmology it is the awesomeness of the transgression that counts. And this insight should be the framework for the interpretation of Antigone and Creon as tragic protagonists.

6.5. The *parode* and the last *stasimon*

Parode

- 100 Ἄχτις ἀελίου, τὸ κάλ-
λιστον ἐπταπύλῳ φανὲν
Θήβῃ τῶν πρότερον φάος,
ἐφάνθη ποτ', ὦ χρυσέας
ἀμέρας βλέφαρον, Διρκαί-
105 ῶν ὑπὲρ ῥεέθρων μολοῦσα,
τὸν λεύκασπιν Ἀργόθεν
φῶτα, βάντα πανσαγία

Parode

Beam of the sun, fairest lighth that
ever dawned on Thebè of the
seven gates, thou hast shone forth
at last, eye of golden day, arisen
aboven Dircè's streams! The
warrior of the white shield, who
came from Argos in his panoply,
hath been stirred by thee to

φυγάδα πρόδρομον, ὅξυτέρῳ
 κινήσασα χαλινῶ.
 110 "Ὀν ἐφ' ἡμετέρῃ γῇ Πολυνείκης
 ἀρθεὶς νεικέων ἐξ ἀμφιλόγων
ὀξέα κλάζων
 αἰετὸς εἰς γῆν ὥς ὑπερέπτῃ,
 λευκῆς χιόνος πτέρυγι στεγανός,
 115 πολλῶν μεθ' ὅπλων
 ξύν θ' ἵπποκόμοις κορύθουσιν.

Στάς δ' ὑπὲρ μελάρων φονώ-
 σαισιν ἀμφιχανῶν κύκλῳ
 λόγχαις ἐπτάπυλον στόμα,
 120 ἔβα πρὶν ποθ' ἀμετέρων
 αἰμάτων γένυσιν πλησθῆ-
 ναὶ (τε) καὶ στεφάνωμα πύργων
 πευκάενθ' "Ηφαιστον ἐλεῖν.
 Τοῖος ἀμφὶ νῶτ' ἐτάθη
 125 πάταγος Ἄρεος, ἀντιπάλου
 δυσχείρωμα δράκαντος.

Ζεὺς γὰρ μεγάλης γλώσσης κόμπους
 ὑπερεχθαίρει, καὶ σφας ἐσιδὼν
 130 πολλῶ ρεύματι προσνισσομένους,
 χρυσοῦ καναχῆς ὑπεροπλίαις,
 παλτῶ ῥίπτει πυρὶ βαλβίδων
 ἐπ' ἄκρων ἦδη
 νίκην ὀρμῶντ' ἀλαλάξαι.

Ἀντιτύπα δ' ἐπὶ γὰρ πέσε τανταλωθεὶς
 135 πυρφόρος ὃς τότε μαινομένης ξύν ὀρμῇ
 βακχεύων ἐπέπνει
 ῥιπαῖς ἐχθίστων ἀνέμων.
 Εἶχε δ' ἄλλα τὰ μέν,
 ἄλλα δ' ἐπ' ἄλλοις ἐπενώμα στυφελί-
 140 ζων μέγας Ἄρης δεξιόσειρος.

Ἐπτά λοχαγοὶ γὰρ ἐφ' ἐπτά πύλαις
 ταχθέντες ἴσοι πρὸς ἴσους ἔλιπον
 Ζηνὶ Τροπαίῳ πάγχυα τέλη,
 145 πλὴν τοῖν στυγεροῖν, ὃ πατὴρ ἐνὸς
 μητρός τε μιᾶς φύντε καθ' αὐτοῖν
 δικρατεῖς λόγχας στήσαντ' ἔχοντες
 κοινοῦ θανάτου μέρος ἄμφω.

headlong flight, in swifter career;
 whom Polyneices set forth against
 our land by reason of vexed
 claims; and, like shrill-screaming
 eagle, he flew over into our land,
 in snow-white pinion sheathed,
 with an armèd throng, and with
 plumage of helms.

He paused above our dwellings;
 he ravened around our sevenfold
 portals with spears athirst for
 blood; but he went hence, or ever
 his jaws were glutted with our
 gore, or the Fire-god's pine-fed
 flame had seized our crown of
 towers. So fierce was the noise of
 battle raised behind him, a thing
 too hard for him to conquer, as
 he wrestled with his dragon foe.

For Zeus utterly abhors the
 boasts of a proud tongue; and
 when he beheld them coming on
 in a great stream, in the haughty
 pride of clanging gold, he smote
 with brandished fire one who was
 now hasting to shout victory at
 his goal upon our ramparts.

Swung down, he fell on the earth
 with a crash, torch in hand, he
 who so lately, in the frenzy of the
 mad onset, was raging against us
 with the blasts of his tempestuous
 hate. But those threats fared not
 as he hoped; and to other foes
 the mighty War-god dispensed
 their several dooms, dealing
 havoc around, a mighty helper at
 our need.

For seven captains at seven gates,
 matched against seven, left the
 tribute of their panoplies to Zeus
 who turns the battle; save those
 two of cruel fate, who, born of
 one sire and one mother, set
 against each other their twain

conquering spears, and are
sharers in a common death.

150 Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἃ μεγαλῶνυμος ἦλθε Νίκα
τᾷ πολυαρμάτῃ ἀντιχαρεῖσα Θήβα,
ἐκ μὲν δὴ πολέμων
τῶν νῦν θέσθαι λησμοσύναν·
θεῶν δὲ ναοὺς χοροῖς
παννυχίοις πάντας ἐπέλθωμεν, ὃ Θή-
βας δ' ἐλελίχθων Βάκχιος ἄρχοι.

But since Victory of glorious
name hath come to us, with joy
responsive to the joy of Thebè
whose chariots are many, let us
enjoy forgetfulness after the late
wars, and visit all the temples of
the gods with night-long dance
and song; and may Bacchus be
our leader, whose dancing shakes
the land of Thebè.

102: πρότερον. J, D: προτέρων 106: Ἀργόθεν. We follow J and D. DM:
'Απιόθεν 107: φῶτα, βάντα. J: ἐκβάντα φῶτα 108: ὄξυτέρῳ. D: ὄξυτόρῳ 110: J:
ὅς ἐφ' ἡμετέρᾳ γᾶ Πολυνείκους, D: ὃν ἐφ' ἡμετέρᾳ γαῖ Πολυνείκης 116: κορύθεσιν. J:
κορύθεσι 125: ἀντιπάλου. J, D: ἀντιπάλῳ 138/39: D: ἄλλα τὰ δ' ἄλλα τὰ δ' ἐπ'
ἄλλοις

Fifth stasimon

1115 Πολυώνυμε, Καδμείας νύμφας ἄγαλμα
καὶ Διὸς βαρυβρεμέτα
γένος, κλυτὰν ὃς ἀμφέπει
Ἱταλίαν, μέδεις δὲ
1120 παγχοίνοις Ἐλευσινίας
Δηοῦς ἐν κόλποις, ὧ Βακχεῦ,
Βακχᾶν ματρόπολιν Θήβαν
ναιετῶν παρ' ὑγρόν (τ')
'Ισμηνοῦ ῥέεθρον, ἀγρίου τ'
1125 ἐπὶ σπορᾷ δράκοντος·

Fifth stasimon

O thou of many names, glory of
the Cadmeian bride, offspring of
loud-thundering Zeus! thou who
watchest over famed Italia, and
reignest, where all guests are
welcomed, in the sheltered plain
of Eleusinian Deò! O Bacchus,
dweller in Thebè, mother-city of
Bacchants, by the softly-gliding
stream of Ismenus, on the soil
where the fierce dragon's teeth
were sown!

σὲ δ' ὑπὲρ διλόφου πέτρας στέροφ' ὅπωπε
λιγνύς, ἐνθα Κωρύκλαι
νύμφαι στίχουσι Βακχίδες
1130 Κασταλίας τε νᾶμα.
Καί σε Νυσαίων ὀρέων
κισσῆρεις ὄχθαι χλωρά τ' ἀκ-
τὰ πολυστάφυλος πέμπει,
ἀμβρότων ἐπέων
1135 εὐαζόντων, Θηβαίας
ἐπισκοποῦντ' ἀγυιάς·

Thou hast been seen where torch-
flames glare through smoke,
above the crests of the twin
peaks, where move the Corycian
nymphs, thy votaries, hard by
Castalia's stream. Thou comest
from the ivy-mantled slopes of
Nysa's hills, and from the shore
green with many-clustered vines,
while thy name is lifted up on
strains of more than mortal

- power, as thou visitest the ways
of Thebè:
- τὰν ἐκ πασᾶν τιμᾶς
ὑπερτάταν πόλεων
ματρὶ σὺν κεραυνίᾳ·
1140 καὶ νῦν, ὥς βιαίᾳς ἔχεται
πάνδαμος πόλις ἐπὶ νόσου,
μολεῖν καθαρσίῳ ποδὶ Παρνασίαν
1145 ὑπὲρ κλιτύν, ἧ στονόεντα πορθμόν.
- Ἰὼ πῦρ πνεόντων
χοράγ' ἄστρον, νυχίων
φθεγμάτων ἐπίσκοπε,
παῖ, Διὸς γένεθλον, προφάνηθ',
1150 ὦναξ, σαῖς ἅμα περιπόλοις
Θυίαισιν, αἶ σε μαινόμεναι πάννυχοι
χορεύουσι τὸν ταμίαν Ἰακχον.
- O thou with whom the stars
rejoice as they move, the stars
whose breath is fire; O master of
the voices of the night; son
begotten of Zeus; appear, O
king, with thine attendant
Thyiads, who in night-long
frenzy dance before thee, the
giver of good gifts, Iacchus!
- 1115: νόμφας ἄγαλμα. D: ἄγαλμα νόμφας 1119: Ἰταλίαν. D: Οἰχαλίαν 1121: Δημοῦς
J,D: Δημοῦς; J. omits ὦ 1124: ῥέεθρον. J: ῥεῖθρον (τ') 1129: J,D: στείχουσι Νύμφαι
Βακχίδες 1134: ἐπέων. D: ἐπετᾶν 1145: κλιτύν. D: κλειτύν 1146: πνεόντων.
J,D: πνειόντων 1149: Διὸς. We follow J. DM: Δῖον. D: Ζηνός

The *parode* and the fifth *stasimon* will be considered together, because they may be conceived of as the side panels of the picture which has emerged from the central *stasima*. As such they are structurally cognate. They form a repetition of a peak in the hope of deliverance, shown in an imagery of light, which is subsequently dashed to the ground, in a repeated game of Dionysus (cf. Rosivach TWA 25).

In these stanzas we have to pay special attention to the harmonizing point of view. According to Rohdich both songs concern the final victory of the polis over the claims of family and individual. He believes that the *parode* impregnates us with the salvation and continuation of the menaced polis and its moderate ideal of life as the final aim of Zeus (A 49). Even the Bacchic oblivion to which the chorus exhorts is an affirmation of the polis (A 51). He holds the same point of view regarding the fifth *stasimon*: it restores the order of the polis—though according to Rohdich the whole tragedy therefore forms an illusion. It disguises the division of political reality by means of the aesthetic appearance of a solution, exemplified in the purely civic Dionysus represented in the fifth *stasimon*.⁵²

⁵² "Dionysos, der Gott der Tragödie, erscheint als Bewahrer der Polis, in der sich das Leben gegen die Gefahr, die es für sich selber ist, die entwickeltste Möglichkeit seiner

Certainly, in the *parode* and the fifth *stasimon* order is an aspect of tragic Dionysus, yet in the course of events it collapses completely. Both stanzas are typical examples of tragic ambiguity. It would be an error to conceive of Polyneices' attack on Thebes in the *parode* as plain baseness. It is not a struggle between the bad guy and the good guy which is depicted, but a struggle of powers which both confound wildness and celestial loftiness. The Argivian army's reckless attack is phrased in striking animal metaphors. Polyneices is compared to a shrill-screaming eagle (ὄρεα κλάζων – 112). This description may point to the sequence of bird-images which is to follow in the episodes. In all cases a confusion of nature and culture is indicated. In this instance Polyneices' brutish behaviour reaches its peak in his attempt to drink human blood (120-22). This pollution, which of course has its background in a series of previous pollutions characteristic of the Labdacids, is the starting point of a sequence of contagions typical of interconnected cosmology. In order to avoid this pollution and use it for his own benefit, Creon leaves the body unburied; to avoid the same pollution from an opposite angle Antigone tries to bury it. Both attempts at control of ambiguity fail and become the cause of even more terrible contaminations which are not entirely subdued at the end of the tragedy.

That the struggle between Polyneices and the city of Thebes is not painted in black and white becomes evident when we realize that not only the attackers are described as animal-like, but the attacked as well. The Thebans are a dragon which it is hard to conquer. In this image we are reminded of the ambiguous origin of the Thebans: they sprang from wild dragon teeth, which were cultivated up to a point by being sown (cf. fifth *stasimon* 1124-25). We are dealing with a battle of the celestial eagle and the chthonic dragon (cf. Il 12.200ff.). Here it seems as if the dragon carries away the palm of victory—but soon enough this victory turns into defeat—ironically precisely because the head of the dragon, Creon, disregards the chthonic aspects of life (Segal TC 195). Rohdich quite correctly describes this general upheaval of categories in the following way: the human world is interpreted theriomorphically, the animal world anthropomorphically (A 45).

This confusion is repeated in the relationship of the contestants to the gods. At first sight, order seems to reign supreme. According to the law of talion, Zeus destroys whoever boasts with a proud tongue (127). But

Erhaltung geschaffen hat. Nach der Konzeption des Chorlieds mit Apollon geradezu verschmolzen, repräsentiert er nicht die unreflektiert-chaotische Kraft einfacher Natur, sondern die Kraft der zur Weltordnung vermittelten Natur, die ihr regulatives Prinzip in sich trägt, durch das sie sich selber bündigt und der Wucherungen entledigt, die ihren Kosmos gefährden" (Rohdich A 214).

it is doubtful whether the order of Zeus has incorporated the disorder of Ares, as Rohdich maintains. Zeus and Ares are closely akin—there is a Zeus Areios, indicating the aspects of disorder which Zeus represents as well. Zeus is *tropaïos* in a general sense: he changes fortunes. In one reading of *δυσχείρωμα* (126 – Kamerbeek A 56-57) it is not the power of the dragon alone which is hard to overcome, but the power of Ares in general. When Ares is called *δεξιόσειρος* (140), the right-hand horse, he may be depicted not as the helper of Olympian order, but as the indispensable power which underlies order but also undermines it. Ares is not only the right-hand horse, he is also disconcerting (*στυφελίζων* – 139). His disconcerting actions are complemented by those of Dionysus.

That Polyneices and his men occupy a dangerous intermediate position between nature and the divine becomes clear when we study their place with respect to the sun and the earth. The light of the sun shines in complete clarity, it is the eye of the golden day and hence the light of salvation (Burton CST 93-94). In their endeavour to transcend human nature, Polyneices and his men are compared to this divine power. They flew over the boundaries (in more than one sense) into the land, occupying an airy position, pausing above the city (117). Like the sun they stood above the earth, with garments white as snow (114). They were in the possession of fire, they clang with gold (130, cf. 103 for the connection of the sun with gold). One of the seven, Capaneus, is called *πυρφόρος* (135), a reminiscence of the 'hybrid' Titan Prometheus who stole the divine fire on behalf of mortals (cf. OC 55)—another indication that we are not confronted with mere baseness.

The attackers have risen to the top, shouting victory, when we realize that this human identification with the sun is at the same time a maniacal drive (*μαινομένεσσι δὲ ὄρμηξ* – 135), prompted by the most evil winds (a first indication of the persistently returning power of the wind throughout the play). That this human identification with the sun was hubris becomes clear when we realize that it is the sun itself who restores order by driving the enemies out (*κινήσασα* – 109). Those who equate themselves with the sun and look down upon the gods are in their turn looked down upon, from the real top, by Zeus (*ἑσίδων* – 128). Their human fire turns out to be weak when it is compared to Zeus' celestial fire (131, cf. Müller SA 53). The result is that the sun-like enemy is confronted with his chthonic nature—he falls down to earth (134). In this combining of high and low he is like tragic Tantalus (*τανταλωθεὶς* – 134, for the connection see Jäkel EAS 49).

The nucleus of the final bloody act in which the Labdacids are wiped off the earth may be found in the ingenious word play in 144ff.: "Save the two hateful people, who, born of one father and one mother, set

against each other their doubly conquering spears, and both partake in a common death." Here we are confronted with a pun on 'one' and 'two' alluding to the tragically ambiguous position of the Labdacids, who are persistently one where they should have been two (transgressive fusion), and who are two where they should have been one (transgressive fission). Polyneices and Eteocles are born of one father and one mother. Of course these were not normal parents: Oedipus and Iocaste were one where they should have been two. As is said in line 53 about Iocaste: "Mother and wife, two names in one"—she fused the functions of wife and mother. Earlier, Oedipus had killed his father—a fission, where the family should have preserved its unity. This contagious play of fusion and fission is continued in the struggle between the brothers. While they should have been one, they are two, because of their conflicting quarrels (νεικήων...ἀμφιλόγων – 111, note the pun on the name Polyneices). The irony is that two enemy brothers cannot really become two. When they use their spears against each other they are also directing them against themselves. Equally ironically, the result of their duality is oneness: they share a common death (147). Even then the play of irony has not ended. Though Polyneices and Eteocles share a common death, their bodies are treated in opposite ways. This renewed fission brings about all subsequent excessive fusions and fissions which constitute the *Antigone*.

It is only in the category of insight that the complete irony of the *parode* is unfolded. The extensive greeting of the light of the sun expresses the chorus' confidence that the danger for Thebes is over, that the polis has been saved. Because we know from the prologue that the chorus is erring in a terrible way we can easily recognize the irony of its statements, but this irony is present in the stanza itself. First of all it is ominous that the chorus should pretend to share in the light of the sun, but at the same time exhort itself to be forgetful: "let us enjoy forgetfulness after the late wars" (150). It wants to dance and sing through the night (in contrast to the daylight which has brought the victory). Secondly, it is just as ominous that the chorus should place itself under the leadership of Dionysus in its mad joy after the war. Here the chorus lives in the hope which is a helpmate, but which is treacherous as well. The chorus hopes for Dionysus as the healer, the institutor of order, but forgets his dangerous transgressing power. Ominously the god is called the shaker of Thebes (ὁ Θήβας δ' ἐλελίχθων Βάκχιος – 153-54). What the chorus does not realize, but what the audience may suspect, is that Thebes has been shaken but that its real upheaval is still to come. What the chorus does not seem to realize either is that it has enrolled itself under the banner of Dionysus, while a few lines before it had condemned Capaneus as βακχεύων, as being Bacchic (Rohdich A 50, cf. Jebb A 35, Müller SA

54—contra Davidson PA 48, who sees no anomaly). We might say that the frenzy of the attackers has spread to the citizens themselves, whose giddy hopes and mad desires will soon fall to the ground as well.

The most striking resemblance between the fifth *stasimon* and the *parode* is that again an ecstatic hope of harmony is shattered and that again Dionysus presides over the ironic revelries. Dionysus is the central deity in the fifth *stasimon* and the chorus persistently sees him as a healer, as a bringer of order and harmony, even on a cosmic scale. One of the names of Dionysus is central: that of Iacchus (1153). By this name he is connected not only with frenzy and punishment, but also with the Eleusinian mysteries. Thus there emerges a vision of harmony on a cosmic scale. Dionysus lives in wild nature, on the ivy-covered hills of Nysa and the shore green with vines, but at the same time he is supposed to be the saviour of the Theban civilization. It is as if the forces of wild nature have lost their awesome aspect. Dionysus seems to cross land and sea without trouble. He leads the chorus of the stars, but he is also master over the city (ἐπισκοποῦντ' – 1136). Because of his conciliatory power Dionysus is asked to heal the violent intrusion of nature into the city. He is said to come with healing foot against its illness (1142-43). The exaltation of the thiasus is considered a purification by control of ambiguity (Vicaire PFD 363-64).

Dionysus is also presented as the mediator in the conflict between Olympian deities and chthonic ones. He is connected with wild nature, but he is also the son of Zeus (1149). If παγκοίνοις...κόλποις may, with Müller, also be read as 'the region of death' (SA 249), then a reconciliation of life and death may be concerned as well. This supposition is strengthened by the allusion to the Eleusinian mysteries, which promised eternal life to their participants. A similar mediating function may be ascribed to Dionysus' birth from a mortal mother and an immortal father. This harmony is set in tones of insight and light. Dionysus is summoned to appear (προφάνηθ' – 1149) as supervisor of Thebes, thus bringing together the opposites which constantly have been in friction between Olympian deities and chthonic ones, between city and nature, between mortality and immortality, between light and darkness, between the wildness of raging maenads and the distant order of the night sky (Segal TC 202).

But this victory of order over disorder is not final, the Dionysus of order has not been separated from wild Dionysus. As in the *parode*, the ominous undertones cannot be neglected. Dionysus is not only Iacchus the reconciler, he has many names (1115), and remains violent and maddening. This wildness can still be felt in the 'moaning strait' (1145)—the dangerous aspect of nature is not altogether absent. Dangerous aspects lurk in the fire breathing stars as well: the epithet may imply the bestial

destructiveness of a monster like the Chimaera (Müller SA 247, Segal TC 204). The torches and nocturnal choruses should warn us if we compare them with their dark counterparts in the *parode*. That Dionysus' mortal mother is referred to does not only point to reconciliation: her fate was terrible (Steiner As 260). And despite the longing for harmony Thebes remains the city originating from a wild dragon (1134-35). In short, Dionysus' epithet *ταμίας*, "he who allots shares," may have a positive sense (giver of good gifts), but a negative one as well. The gifts of power may stand for malignity (Vicaire PFD 363, 367, 369). Müller is right when he maintains that this god of the source of life is also terrible and lethal (SA 248).

The most ironic ambiguity surrounds the chorus' pretensions to insight into Dionysus' healing qualities. As in the *parode*, this insight is also a form of mania (*μαϊνόμεναι* – 1151), connected with the night and not with daylight. Neither the *parode* nor the fifth *stasimon* is reconciliatory, because they are typically Sophoclean *hyporchemata*, songs of gladness which are counterpoints to the ensuing disaster (Jebb A 198). The tragic ambiguity here is complicated. In a sense, what the chorus expects does not happen: the city is not saved by the burial of Polyneices and the attempted rescue of Antigone. Yet in another sense, ironically Dionysus is indeed the saviour of the city; the chorus is partly right. The pollution is removed from the city, but in an unexpected way and contrary to what the chorus believed: by Antigone's death and Creon's destruction. As Rohdich says, the city has been purified—but this should not blind us to the tragic ambiguity which continues to reign. There is no reason to suppose that the chorus is now able to separate Dionysus' beneficial aspects from his maleficent ones. The chorus's false hopes are no accident—they are the false hopes on which man lives, and through which he is destroyed at the same time. As Steiner says: "The fundamental division, exactly reflecting the chorus's false hopes of imminent delivery from death and from hatred in the city, is that between Dionysus the protector and Dionysus the elemental agent of inhuman logic" (As 101). This tragic division appears as follows: the city can only continue its existence by sacrificing those who are its most respected representatives, and there is no end to this persistent self-sacrifice.

In conclusion we may say that the *Antigone's* choral songs are penetrated by a sense of the fragility of human civilization. This fragility is due to man's nearness to nature in combination with his nearness to the divine, which is deceitful and dangerous. Man's active, hopeful, desiring nature brings him to greatness and to baseness in an inevitable fusion (cf. Steiner As 261-62). The *stasima* offer no reason to suspect that this conflicting and ambiguous human nature applies to Antigone more than to Creon.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE EPISODES OF SOPHOCLES' ANTIGONE

7.1. Creon's speech

In lines 162-210 Creon presents us with his cosmology, the structural counterpart to Antigone's speech in 450-70. Contrary to its interpretation by separative orthodoxy, Creon's speech is not that of a base and merely human character, but the utterance of a person who is extremely high in the city and whose position is tragically conflicting, since his high position compels him to take an absolute stand where his principles are concerned. He is forced to transcend his human limitations, both in having to suppress opposing principles, resulting in one-sidedness, and in having to be convinced of the absolute value of his view of the existing cosmology, resulting in an ironical reversal of his intentions.

Creon is determined to deserve his high position in the city in all relevant cosmological categories. First of all he points out that the ship of state was threatened by a sea of troubles (162-63). He is obviously alluding to the events in the *parode*, but his reference to the danger of the wild sea is no mere metaphor here. It expresses a fear of a real intrusion of nature into the confines of civilization as a consequence of Oedipus' contagious pollution, which had caused the mutual slaying of Polyneices and Eteocles. As the new substitute of Thebes, Creon considers himself the warder of civilized order against the undermining powers of nature. He cedes the honour of having saved the ship of civilization to the gods (162), showing himself the pious opposite of an autocratic tyrant in his confidence that only the gods have saved Thebes, that he should rely on Zeus (184-85), and in his indignation with Polyneices who "sought to consume utterly with fire" "the shrines of his fatherland's gods" (θεοὺς τοὺς ἐγγενεῖς - 199) (cf. Knox HT 101, SP 15).

In Creon's cosmology there are unbreakable ties between the divine sphere, the polis and its king. The welfare of the city was considered to be dependent upon divine assistance (Creon piously invokes Zeus - 184), but the city was also believed to be directly connected with its king. Creon reflects this interconnected cosmology, when he refers twice to the "power" of the throne (κράτη - 166, 173), and when he adds that by his separations of friends and foes (182-83) and of ruin and safety for the city (ἄτην, σωτηρίας - 185-86) he is able to make the city prosper (τήνδ' αὖξω πόλιν - 191). It is a consequence of this interconnectedness of city, divine

sphere and king, that the king's words are not merely law—they are divinely sanctioned.

Although the divine interests of the city are foremost in Creon's speech, he does acknowledge the equally divine importance of family ties. He admits that his authority is founded on his kinship with the house of Oedipus (γένους κατ' ἀγχιστεῖα – 174) (Jebb A 42; for the meaning of ἀγχιστεῖα cf. Ch. 4.). Regarding his claim to possess insight, Creon is as prudent as is feasible for a king who is the city's representative. He is determined to listen to good counsel (179), he acknowledges that a man's words should be corroborated by his deeds (175-77), and he is fully cognizant of the frailty of human knowledge when it is compared to that of Zeus, "who sees all things always" (ὁ πάνθ' ὁρῶν αἰεὶ – 184).

Creon's most fundamental cosmological convictions can be found in the categories of life and death and of justice. He claims that in general his authority is legitimate and that in particular justice is on his side in his decree that the body of Polyneices should not be interred. In order to assess the meaning of Creon's words it is essential to take into account that they are spoken in the context of interconnected cosmology. In that cosmology the identification of the king with his city is unquestioned. Whoever resists Creon resists the city as a whole and is a traitor. Therefore Creon's threat to ban whoever would try to obstruct his ordinances would be seen as an example of sound leadership (182-83: "if any makes a friend (φίλον) of more account than his fatherland (πάτρας), that man I declare to be nowhere (οὐδαμοῦ)." That Creon's speech was highly valued in Antiquity (in contrast to modern separatist prejudice) is confirmed by Demosthenes' favourable citation (19.247, cf. Knox HT 86N). Demosthenes emphasizes that being high in the city, as Creon now is, implies high duties. A king has to forfeit his allegiance to his family in favour of the polis—otherwise he may be accused of nepotism (cf. Pericles in Thyc 2.60, Jebb A 45). That is the background to Creon's forceful separation between those who support the city and those who do not: "Never would I deem the country's foe (ἄνδρα δυσμενῆ χθονός) a *philos* [friend or kinsman] to myself" (187-88). Whoever resists the polis, be he friend or family member, will be treated equally by Creon. We have to conclude that Creon's speech reflects Athenian constitutional proceedings.¹ The idea that Creon's law is a mere human edict is not in accordance with its interconnected nature (Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 8 contra Jebb A xxii).

¹ Cf. Goheen ISA 46-47, Kamerbeek A 61, Knox HT 86. For the expression "I shall make the polis great" (αὖξω πόλιν – 191) compare Xen Mem 3.7.2., Lycurg. c. Leocrat. 76-77.

The same may be said of Creon's specific decree to prevent the burial of Polyneices. In order to estimate its justification in interconnected cosmology we first have to determine Polyneices' position. Creon's decree would have been unjust if Polyneices had been a mere enemy: it was a holy custom in Greece to accord burial rites to one's fallen foes. But Polyneices was not an enemy—he was a representative of a much more dangerous class of men: those who undermine their own city. He was a traitor and consequently a transgressor of all relevant boundaries.² Because traitors were considered abominable defilements of the city, it was common to leave their bodies unburied to serve as abhorrent examples.³ In this context we have to take issue with those interpreters who acknowledge that Creon was justified in not burying Polyneices but maintain that he committed an outrage by not throwing the body over the borders of Thebes to be buried elsewhere, and leaving it within its confines (e.g. Linforth AC 191, Eberlein DKT 25). The reply to this sophistry is that this is not an issue in the play at all (Hester SU 20, Cerri IAS 123). Nobody tells Creon he should have had Polyneices buried elsewhere, not even Tiresias. Furthermore, throwing a body over the frontiers did not necessarily imply burial. Finally, these interpreters cannot explain why in the end Polyneices is buried in his native earth (1203).

Creon's decree that Polyneices should be left unburied is no baseness; it has to be understood in the light of interconnected cosmology with its emphasis on ritual control of pollution and ambiguity. Creon emphasizes the polluting power of Polyneices' corpse. It is barred from its proper place, the realm of the dead, and it is not allowed to receive the due rites of passage from its living kin to its dead kin either. Nobody is allowed to bury or lament it (203-04). It is left to the forces of nature (Segal TC 157), as food for wild and marginal animals (birds and dogs – 205-06). The citizens are summoned to look at the pollution: the body is mangled for all to see (αἰχμαθὲν τ' ἰδεῖν – 206). It is plausible that Creon is moved by the hope that the pollution may be used in a purificatory way by demarcating a clear ritual context. This ritually ambiguous procedure with respect to Polyneices compels Creon to make a separation between the two brothers: Eteocles' corpse is purified in the ordinary way (ἀφαργνίσαι – 196). From the state's point of view this difference is ineluctable. Eteocles was the opposite of a traitor: he fell fighting for the city (194-95, cf. Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 11). The ritual separation between

² Nature (112-13), the gods (199, 286), the polis (113, 199, 287), family and death (the killing of his brother which was also a suicide – 56-57, 144-47, 171-72), justice (287), insight (212). In line 870 Antigone adds marriage.

³ Cf. Höpener BSA 74, Mette AS 131, Cerri IAS 121, all contra Jebb A xxii.

the two brothers exemplifies the city's separation of good men and evil ones in general: "never, by deed of mine, shall the wicked stand in honour before the just; but whoso hath good will to Thebes, he shall be honoured of me, in his life and in his death" (208-10). The citizens, as represented by the chorus, show confidence in Creon's ritual ambiguity towards Polyneices. Their reaction is not unfavourable (Müller SA 61, Alexanderson SCA 88). They consider the death-penalty a normal punishment for transgressing Creon's decree (220, cf. Müller SA 62).

In so far as Creon's speech reflects the divine character of the polis and its substitute, the king, it is impossible to consider him a merely human usurper, but his position is not invulnerable. In Sophocles' interconnected cosmology it is an extremely dangerous thing to be high in the city, this royal position verging on being an outcast, because of the excessiveness accompanying princehood. This danger of touching on supra-human power, which all too soon destroys human loftiness, rumbles below the surface of Creon's speech again in all six fundamental categories.⁴

Though Creon emphasizes that the gods have set the ship of state on a right course, as Thebes' royal substitute he must at the same time underline the identification of his own high position with the welfare of the city. This brings him into dangerous proximity to the gods, as is apparent in his statement that *he* is the one who steers the ship of state (178), adding that he is the one who will make the city great (191). Because of his lofty substitutive position Creon comes near to self-deification (Else MA 96), something which, by the law of talion and the jealousy of the gods, only too soon turns into a renewed intrusion of wild nature into the confines of civilization. The awkwardness of Creon's relationship with the gods also becomes clear from the fact that he can only be consistent in his endeavours to support the gods of the city of Thebes by disregarding the conflicting claims of the nether gods representing the family and its dead members (Knox HT 101-02). That Creon is compelled to be one-sided is also shown in his words: when he says that Polyneices wanted to set fire to the θεοὺς τοὺς ἐγγενεῖς (199), he has to restrict the meaning of these words to "the gods of the city," whereas they also mean "the gods of the family." Creon is unable to take the latter meaning into account without losing his own position as leader of the city, but this means that he himself is unwittingly doing what he reproaches Polyneices with. And it is just as uncertain that the gods of the polis will support Creon when his lofty position forces him into their proximity.

⁴ "The whole of Creon's first speech is shot through with hints and ambiguities which qualify the surface impression of political wisdom" (Winnington-Ingram SI 124).

The same problem of one-sidedness and potential undermining of his own principles relates to Creon's social ties—and is again seen in his use of words in a single, restricted sense. As the head of the polis he is intrinsically unable to appreciate the whole gamut of meanings of the word φίλος, which means "beloved," "friend" and "kinsman," and therefore combines the fundamental ties of marriage, comradeship in the city, and family membership (Knox HT 80). Being the king, Creon has to "make" his φίλοι (187-88, 190), i.e. he has to confine the meaning of the word to comradeship in the polis, at the expense of its other, cosmologically equally important aspects. Creon's tragic problem is that as the representative of Thebes he has to suppress the claims of family, leading to ironical one-sidedness and to the undermining of his own position. In his championship of the city he must forget that he is a fuser of roles. Creon himself has pointed out that he owes his power to a specific family, the Labdacids (Else MA 40, Rosivach TWA 22), but as a king he has to do the opposite of what is his duty as a member of that family: take care of the corpse of one of its members (Linforth AC 191, Patzer HHS 8). This tragic paradox turns out to be truly ambiguous when we realize that the family in question is dangerously ambiguous (Benardete RSA I 172-73). Creon legitimizes his royal position by his family ties with Oedipus, who, in Creon's words, had righted the city (167), just as Creon himself intends to do (190)—an awkward argument, for in his description of Oedipus he has to suppress the other Oedipus, the outcast, scapegoat, the polluted Oedipus who undermined the city. Moreover, Creon is appealing to his ties of blood with a family, two members of which are dangerously polluted according to his own words (172). Through his connection with the Labdacids Creon might become infected with this contamination as well.

Creon's tragic predicament is harshly revealed when we consider the stand he has to take on life and death. As the king of Thebes he has to promote the life of his city. At the same time as its representative he is unable to recognize the claims of the dead in so far as these claims run counter to the interest of the state. As Thebes' substitute Creon has immense power. His decisions on life and death are almost divine, a fact the chorus is referring to when it says that it is his prerogative to decide "both for the dead, and for all of us who live" (καὶ τῶν θανόντων χῶπόςσιν ἕλωμεν πέρι - 214). It is questionable whether a mortal, even a royal mortal, is able consistently to bear this power over life and death. As the city's representative Creon's decisions with respect to life and death must inevitably be one-sided for the benefit of the city: "whoso is of good will towards the city, he shall be honoured in death and life alike" (209-10).

The same dangers surround Creon's relationship to the category of

justice. He is forced to claim that his royal position enables him to make a clear separation between the wicked and the just (208)—but that separation is problematic. Creon is confronted with the problems of fusion and fission characteristic of the Labdacids. He recognizes these problems when he says of Polyneices and Eteocles: “they have fallen by a twofold doom (πρὸς διπλῆς μοίρας) on one and the same day (μίαν καθ’ ἡμέραν),” “by their own hands,” and “both slaying and being slain” (170-72). Creon brings himself into their orbit when, as the representative of the city, he has to make a fission in the final fusion of the two brothers. Though both brothers are polluted by their own hands (αὐτόχειρι σὺν μιάσματι - 172) he is compelled, for political reasons, to bury Eteocles as one of the best and to leave Polyneices unburied, but this politically motivated decision disregards the similarity of the brothers, who both polluted themselves and each other (Jebb A 47, Else MA 41, Benardete RSA I 175). Creon’s tragic problem is that both he and Polyneices are fusers of opposite roles. Creon is the king, but he has to suppress the fact that he is also a kinsman to Polyneices. Polyneices is a traitor, but Creon has to leave out of his consideration that he is also the former king’s son and a relative. Creon’s attempt to control ambiguity in leaving Polyneices unburied is extremely dangerous: it is uncertain whether the gods will accept the separations he has to make. If the ritual employment of pollution should fail, an outbreak of uncontrollable pollution, exuding from the body, spreading to Creon’s own family and to the Labdacids, and finally to the whole city, is to be feared.

The irony of Creon’s position may be summarized in the category of insight. He piously concedes that Zeus sees (ὄρων - 184) everything, but one line afterwards he states that he will not be silent if *he* sees (ὄρων - 185) ruin coming to the city. As the king, Creon has to be on the outlook for the welfare of the city. But this Zeus-like position might turn on him, because Zeus accepts no competition. He might ensure that this mortal in his semi-immortal position will finally turn out to be blind to the interests of the city, not because he is base or mediocre, but because the playful divine powers have led him into a divided and ambiguous position in which the bestial and the divine merge. The separatists who deny Creon his tragic position have to separate this royal tragedy from the play.

7.2. Antigone’s speech

Despite the fact that Antigone’s speech occurs some 300 lines after Creon’s, from a synchronic point of view the expositions are structurally analogous through opposition. It is not true that Antigone’s cosmology

is divine contrasted with Creon's secular pronouncements (e.g. Lesky GL 321)⁵, but her principles are as divine as Creon's, as divided and as tragically ambiguous.⁶

The atmosphere in which Antigone's speech should be understood is indicated by the chorus's reaction to this atmosphere when it calls her the raw offspring of a raw father (γέννημ' ὠμόν ἐξ ὠμοῦ πατρός - 471). The adjective 'raw,' taken from the culinary code, points to the dangerous, wild character of the Labdacids, a character of which Antigone, her semi-divine character notwithstanding, gives ample proof in her speech. Antigone's character is shown in the uncompromising power with which she defends her cosmology. This power makes her lofty but also unable to yield, even in bad circumstances (472).

Few interpreters will deny that Antigone defends a divine principle when she claims that Polyneices should be buried. Small wonder that she should appeal to the gods in general (454, 459), but also to Zeus (450) and the nether gods (451) in particular. Antigone shows her piety by making a clear distinction between the merely human sphere to which Creon's ideas belong (ἀνδρὸς...φρόνημα - 458-59) and the divine sphere. Many adherents of separative cosmology find a justification here for their sanctification of Antigone in contrast to Creon's mere humanity.

But then they have to suppress Creon's claims to divine support as well as the ominous undertones which are audible in Antigone's words no less than in Creon's. While Creon only appealed to the gods of the city, especially to Zeus as the representative of Thebes, Antigone does the opposite: she also appeals to Zeus—but she is only able to appeal to this many-sided god as the protector of the family or the dead (Knox HT 99). Like Creon, Antigone has to repress Zeus' other sides in order to uphold her own. What is self-evident in separative eyes—Antigone's claim that the state cannot boast divine support—was anything but self-evident to the interconnected cosmology of the Greeks. When Antigone denies that Creon's decree is divine law (453-54), she is in fact challenging the whole interconnected order. Her reckless defence of one divine power to the detriment of others would be felt to be extremely dangerous.

As in Creon's case, the wording of the text makes it questionable whether Antigone will really turn out to be a trustworthy representative of her own divine hemisphere. Antigone is quite convinced that her ideas have divine support, especially from Zeus, but it is extremely dangerous for a mortal to claim to be certain of the actions of the divine sphere,

⁵ Against this view because of its anachronism: Knox HT 91, Calder III SPT 404, Ferguson PMF 45, Hester LPA 7, Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 8.

⁶ For Antigone's one-sidedness, see Knox HT, esp 94, 99; for ambiguities in Antigone's speech, see esp. Benardete RSA II 11-13.

especially in this case. Both Antigone herself (2-3) and the chorus (605) explicitly connect her family's ruin with the same Zeus who is supposed to support her cause. The same irony surrounds Antigone's appeal to the nether gods (451), in contrast to Creon's Olympian gods: in the end it is the nether gods who will mow her down as the last representative of the Labdacids (601 - Else MA 45).

Of course, Antigone's enforced one-sidedness with respect to the divine sphere propagates itself in one-sidedness towards the polis, in favour of the family. But she has to forget that—just like Creon, she occupies a position of role fusion. She has to suppress the fact that after the death of Oedipus and his sons, Creon is not only her king, but plays an important familial role as well: he is her guardian (cf. 486f., 533, 658-60; Pomeroy GWW 102). In defending her family, Antigone is forced to undermine her most important family tie—she disobeys her guardian. What Antigone also has to repress, is that, like Creon, she belongs to a contaminated family possessed by a hereditary curse which makes them fusers of what should remain separate and separators of what should stay connected. It is not only the chorus which points to the inherited curse of the Labdacids (by calling Antigone a raw offshoot of a raw father - 471, cf. 379-80, Müller SA 102). Unwittingly Antigone does the same when she calls Polyneices τὸν ἐξ ἐμῆς μητρὸς θάνοντ' (466-67). This phrase does not only mean that Polyneices is her mother's dead son, but may also indicate that he has been killed *by* that mother through the pollution of the latter's incestuous marriage (Benardete RSA II 11). As is shown in the course of the tragedy, Antigone is unable to avoid this pollution. It may already be sensed that by contamination the enmity between Polyneices and Eteocles has spread to the repetitive enmity between Antigone and Creon (Rohdich A 123-24).

Before admiring Antigone as the lonesome heroine doing her duty in an evil world we should remember that from the point of view of the family her burial of Polyneices was not just the fulfilment of an obligation. Admittedly it was the prerogative of the family to bury its dead, but that did not imply that an unmarried girl was entitled to implement this office on her own. Normally it was the men, not the women, who were in charge of the funeral ceremony, the women playing a secondary role (Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 15). Therefore in Greek eyes, contrary to those of separative romanticism, Antigone's deed was an example of reckless daring and as such extremely dangerous. By behaving like a man, she exceeded her feminine nature and the pattern of family roles (Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 4-5).

Similar cautions apply to Antigone's attitude concerning her own death. We separatists are accustomed to admiring saints sacrificing their

mortal lives by separating it from their eternal principles, but such was not the ordinary Greek conception of life and death. According to Greek cosmology, man is a mortal who should amalgamate the realization of death and finiteness with the acceptance of life. In her lofty devotion to her brother Antigone is compelled not just to forgo life, but even to disdain it. She soars to immortal heights when she says that dying "before her time" (τοῦ χρόνου πρόσθεν - 461-62) is a "gain." Just as Creon was supposed to be master of life and death from the point of view of life, Antigone believes she controls life and death from the point of view of a person who is already dead. In the word "gain" (κέρδος - 462, 464) the opposition between the two protagonists' mirroring one-sidedness is revealed. As in the case of the word *philos*, which Antigone employs exclusively for her kinsmen, both are intrinsically unable to appreciate the whole ambiguous variety of meanings of the word. Creon constantly speaks of gain as financial profit in life (222, 294, 310, 312, 326), whereas Antigone has to stick to the other pole of the word. She considers death as the only gain that matters (Goheen ISA 17). That Antigone's boast that she already belongs to the sphere of death was not ordinarily acclaimed as the prudent attitude in ancient Greece may be inferred from the words of the chorus when it says that only a fool desires to die (μῶρος ὃς θανεῖν ἐρᾷ - 220).

The preceding remarks should cast doubts on the purity of the principles Antigone appeals to in order to justify her behaviour. The unwritten customs she is referring to are the duties connected with the burial of dead kinsmen (Knox HT 96).⁷ Certainly these unwritten customs (ἄγραπτα...νόμιμα - 454-55) are divine duties, but they cannot be opposed to the laws of the city as overriding divine principles. Again we are confronted with the compulsory blindness of the mortal who advocates absolute principles. Antigone has to confine justice to the realm of the nether gods. She speaks of "justice who dwells with the gods below" (ἡ ξύννοικος τῶν κάτω θεῶν Δίκη - 451), implying that she is forced to repress the fact that *dike* reigns over the whole cosmos. There is also a *dike* of the Olympians, sitting high on its throne. That lofty, Olympian justice is the city's divine support that Antigone is opposed to (Winnington-Ingram SI 142). It should cause no surprise that each protagonist reproaches the other with being a transgressor (ὑπερδραμεῖν - 455; ὑπερβαίνειν - 449).

Antigone's tragic position—just like Creon's—is that in order to carry through her lofty principles she has to claim that she knows the nature

⁷ "La pièce maîtresse de la religion familiale, c'est le culte des morts; on lui applique par excellence l'expression de νόμιμα" (Gernet/Boulanger GGR 244). Cf. Soph El 1096, Eur Hel 1270, Suppl 19, 311.

of justice, that she knows that she is vouchsafed to death, that she knows where her profit lies. Such claims to knowledge are dangerous for a mortal—they threaten to violate the prerogatives of the gods. It is ominous that at the conclusion of her speech Antigone should connect both Creon and herself with the realm of mania: “and if it seems to you that I act like a fool (μῶρα), it is more or less by a fool (μῶρῳ) that I am convicted of folly (μωρία)” (469-70). The conclusion must be that in all relevant cosmological categories Antigone’s principles are the reverberating echoes of Creon’s principles: both are examples of man’s awesomeness.

7.3. Antigone and Ismene

Antigone’s twofold encounter with her sister, in the prologue (1-99) and in the second episode (526-81), is a good example of structural repetition. In both discussions the same cosmological statements are repeated, with a slight but important variation. The opposition between Ismene and Antigone, reiterated in the opposition between the guard and Creon, is of the utmost importance. The cosmological picture of the *Antigone* is not complete until not only the opposition between Creon and Antigone is taken into account—‘hybrid’ characters mirroring each other— but the opposition between the two ‘hybrid’ characters and the two prudent ones as well.

Most interpreters agree on Ismene’s character. As Goethe said, she is “ein schönes Mass des Gewöhnlichen” (in Goth SA 32), an average woman (Jebb A xviii, Müller SA 26), who is a defender of prudence, in opposition to Antigone’s passionate nature.⁸ Whereas like Creon, Antigone in her haughtiness has to make harsh separations, Ismene tries to reconcile conflicting demands (Jens AI 297). The problem for the separative and the harmonizing points of view is not Ismene’s character, but the question of how the structural relationship between the two sisters must be understood: the separative and harmonizing points of view are forced to disregard some aspects of this structural opposition.

For separatists, the difficulty is that if Antigone is to be considered an example of pure justice, Ismene, who remains opposed to her, is to be considered unjust, which is not in accordance with her alleged prudence.

⁸ Adams AS 48, Else MA 29, Goth SA 31-32, Jäkel EAS 40-43, Jens AI 296, Kirkwood SSD 120, Rohdich A 31, Wiersma WS 42. A parallel has been drawn with the opposition between Electra and her sister Chrysothemis in the *Electra* (Wiersma WS 31, Winnington-Ingram SW 243).

Either Ismene's prudence is acknowledged, but Antigone's purity is undermined, or Antigone's purity is defended, but Ismene's prudence has to be played down. The latter strategy has been applied by certain outstanding separatists, who have banned her from the tragic realm by denouncing her as "all too human" (Kamerbeek A 9), or as unimportant and untragic (Jens AI 297).

The harmonizing point of view considers Antigone and Creon as one-sided representatives of aspects of justice which should finally be reconciled in a higher unity, but Ismene already embodies an attempt at prudent reconciliation. How is her tragic position in the structure of oppositions to be understood in the harmonizing conception? Does she represent the desired reconciliation? Then the ensuing tragic conflict between Creon and Antigone is totally unnecessary: they should have listened to the voice of circumspection. Does Ismene represent something other than the desired reconciliation? Then we cannot understand why the chorus should conclude with an appeal to prudence, why it should exhort the audience to be Ismenian. It should come as no surprise that in many harmonizing accounts of the tragedy Ismene is suppressed as being unimportant, or is even left out of the interpretation—a questionable separation.

A reverse position is taken by Rohdich. He considers the *Antigone* as a successful summons to prudence. He is convinced that Ismene represents the human ability to yield, to save oneself by accepting conflicting reality as it is (A 31). This conception leaves open the question whether the tragedy really claims that it is humanly possible to be as prudent as Ismene seems to be. Could Antigone have been like Ismene? In this conception the behaviour of Antigone and Creon is an avoidable aberration which might have been prevented by behaving like Ismene. This boils down to a separation of Antigone and Creon from the tragic realm.

The *Antigone* can only be fully appreciated if we realize that the conflict between Ismene and Antigone, repeated in the conflict between the guard and Creon, is a humanly inevitable conflict between the need to accept order as it is and the equally unavoidable necessity to transcend order in the veneration of the combined frenzy and sublimity of power. Both are inevitable, irreconcilable, and vain. Just as Antigone's power finally brings ruin and disaster, Ismene's order disappears into oblivion (Jens AI 297). Life's tragedy is that man is both Ismene and Antigone and cannot be either of them.

In her description of Antigone in the prologue, Ismene more than once preludes on remarks of the chorus. Just like the chorus calls Antigone raw, Ismene connects her with darkness and trouble, like the sea before

the storm (καλχαίνουσ' - 20).⁹ This is understandable in the light of the two sisters' divergent opinions with respect to their own nature: whereas Ismene prudently points out their feminine nature (γυναῖχ'...ἔφουμεν - 61-62), Antigone boasts of the noble nature of the Labdacids (εὐγενῆς πέφυκας - 38)—a statement suppressing the wild aspects of this awesome race (Benardete RSA I 154). This difference between a civilized prudent character and Antigone's untamed power is prominent in all categories. As a model of untamed autonomy, Antigone generally claims that she is able to make clear separations. In contrast to her own piety she pretends to know that Ismene dishonours the gods (77), whereas Ismene is merely trying to reconcile the divine claims of the dead with those of the city (65-66).

Antigone has to boast that she is able to distinguish her enemies, being evil, from her *philoī*—again employing *philoī* exclusively for her family members and ignoring the claims of the polis (Knox HT 80, Winnington-Ingram SI 129). Again she is opposed to the conciliatory Ismene, who combines respect for her family with awe for the polis (44, 47, 79)(Goth SA 31-32), and who is aware of the dangerously equivocal position of the Labdacids. Ismene shows up Antigone's onesidedness with respect to their family by pointing to the Labdacids' awesome tendency towards autocracy and autonomy in a series of compounds with αὐτός (51, 52, 56), to their father's ignoble deeds and fate (ἀμπλακημάτων - 51),¹⁰ and to the fact that their mother had polluted her life (λωβᾶται βίον - 54). She is afraid that this pollution may spread to Antigone, together with their brothers' dangerous fission (55-57) (note Ismene's juxtaposition of 'two' and 'one' in line 55: δύο μίαν). Ismene deplors Antigone's acts as violence against the city (βίᾳ πολιτῶν - 79), but she is also afraid of the consequences for their family. She points out that Antigone and she are the last of the Labdacids (58). This does not mean that in her reconciliatory prudence Ismene cannot acknowledge Antigone's loyalty to their family. She calls her a true *philos* for her *philoī* (99).¹¹ Again the contrast to Antigone's attitude is palpable. Though in the beginning Antigone emphasizes her community with Ismene (1), in the course of the prologue she violently separates herself both from her sister and from her uncle, lumping them together as enemies (10, 86, 93-94,

⁹ Jebb A 12, Goheen ISA 45N, Segal TC 163; perhaps the tiding (ἔπος - 20) darkening Antigone is not Creon's decree but her own plan to bury Polyneices (Verdenius SA 392, contra Jebb A 12).

¹⁰ The word ἀμπλάκημα comprises the same meaning as the verb ἀμαρτανεῖν (Gernet RPG 39).

¹¹ We follow Knox (HT 81) and Kamerbeek (A 53), amongst others, who take φίλη in an active sense, contra Jebb (A 27) who translates "to thy dear ones truly dear," but a deliberate ambiguity cannot be excluded.

cf. Winnington-Ingram SI 129, 135N). Through the contrast to Ismene, Antigone's predicament develops further. In her extreme loyalty to her brother Polyneices she also has to undermine her loyalty to her other family members. She isolates herself dangerously by denying her ties with her guardian/uncle and sister. This fission bears a certain resemblance to Oedipus' patricide, to Creon's refusal to bury Polyneices, and to the lethal fission between the two ill-starred brothers.

The excessive fission between Oedipus and his father, and between Eteocles and Polyneices is not only repeated in the fission between Antigone and Ismene. It is also repeated in an inverted way in the excessive fusion of Antigone and Polyneices. Antigone's love for Polyneices is not just the care of a loving sister for a deceased brother: it is a dangerous fusion of what should remain separate. Ismene's emphasis on their womanhood is not without ground. By her excessive loyalty to Polyneices Antigone has to transgress against her feminine nature—she has to renounce her female *ergon* of leaving her family and joining that of her husband. Thereby she jeopardizes her chances of fulfilling her nature as a woman who marries and has children. The extreme loyalty to her brother even threatens to become a dangerous confusion of the ties of kinship and love. Her attitude to Polyneices verges on the incestuous (another repetition of her father's behaviour) when she remarks: "I shall lie, a loved one, with whom I have loved" (Φίλη μετ' αὐτοῦ κείσομαι, φίλου μέτα - 73). In this context *philos* might mean "lover" (Winnington-Ingram SI 129), especially because *κείμαι* is a common euphemism for sexual intercourse (Winnington-Ingram SI 130, Benardete RSA I 159, Steiner As 158).

In the realm of death Antigone and Ismene are again opposed as hubris to prudence. Whereas Antigone is certain that she will die nobly, like a patriotic soldier (καλόν, καλῶς - 72, 97) (Benardete RSA I 158), Ismene is afraid that they will die in the most dreadful way (κάκιστ' ὀλόυμεθ' - 59). Furthermore, Antigone claims that she is able to make a clear distinction between her living relatives and the dead. She claims the right to neglect the former on behalf of the latter, with the argument that she will have to stay with the dead for a longer time (74-76). Ismene, on the contrary, knows that mortals have to move between life and death. She tries to stay alive (58-59) and to appease their dead relatives (65-66) at the same time. From this position she reproaches Antigone that she has a warm heart for icy things (Θερμὴν ἐπὶ ψυχροῖσι καρδίαν ἔχεις - 88).

The same opposition is shown regarding justice. While Antigone is only interested in justice where burial is at stake (23, 94), Ismene deplores her sister's violent and violating tendencies against the law of the city (νόμου βία - 59). The perspicacity of Ismene's point of view may be inferred from Antigone's own words: "Knowest thou what ill there

is from Oedipus that Zeus fulfils (τελεῖ) not for us twain while we live'' (2-3). Here Antigone explicitly acknowledges the curse of the Labdacids, in which bad circumstances and bad deeds are inextricably interconnected. Antigone's tragedy is that she is unable to live up to this insight. She has to be firm in her belief that the Labdacids are noble and just (Else MA 33). If τελεῖ in line 2 is taken as a future tense instead of a present tense, Antigone's words are ominously predictive: they point to the contagious pollution which will overtake her.

Time and again Ismene admonishes her sister to be prudent (42, 49, 61, 68). She deplores her reckless temperament, and calls her "overbold" (σχετλία - 47), referring to her deed as a "bold venture" (κινδύνευμα - 42) which is "extravagant" (περισσά - 68). Finally she even reproaches Antigone with being senseless (ἄνους - 99). What is striking—and devastating to the orthodox view in so far as it considers Antigone a blameless heroine—is that there are a few occasions in which she herself alludes to her awesome recklessness. In line 74 she says of herself that she acts "in holy over-boldness" (ἕσια πανουργήσας). Orthodox interpreters have been compelled to develop several separative strategies to prevent Antigone from admitting that her position is tragically divided, that she is a holy criminal. Jebb for example maintains that she believes she has only broken a human law, while she claims to have observed the divine law (A 23)—a violent separation. Kamerbeek argues that Antigone is not serious when she calls herself πανουργήσας. According to Kamerbeek the word "is scornful and the phrase is provocative but in no way whatsoever implies a consciousness of guilt" (A 49). It is tempting to consider these exorcizing statements a result of the fact that our separative cosmology cannot accept real duality.

Similar separative moves have been made regarding Antigone's lines 95-96: "But leave me, and the folly (δυσβουλίαν) that is mine alone, to suffer this awesomeness (τὸ δεινὸν τοῦτο)." Jebb thinks that the word δεινὸν is here used ironically (A 27), while Müller maintains the same of the word δυσβουλίαν (SA 40). Again they exorcize Antigone's tragic ambiguity—that she belongs to the sphere of the δεινὸν from the first *stasimon*, the sphere of immense power which is unbearable to man and therefore makes him end in divine folly (Benardete RSA I 165). This divine madness is not applauded as romantic heroism or as leading to a new harmony; it is considered inevitable and as futile as Ismene's sense of order.

As regards the second dialogue between the sisters, there is no need to point out all the parallels with the prologue: it is a complete reiteration in all categories.¹² We shall confine ourselves to a few remarks.¹³

¹² Antigone and Ismene (in Creon's eyes Antigone's accomplice) are compared to ad-

The assigning of line 572 is a fine example of the separating strategies of the orthodox, here revealing themselves prepared to disregard all philological arguments if their heroic picture of Antigone is put in jeopardy. The full weight of all evidence inclines to allotting the line to Ismene (Winnington-Ingram SI 93N). It is Ismene who says: "Dearest Haemon, how thy father wrongs thee." All manuscripts as well as the scholium (Hester SU 30N) assign the verse to her. It is part of a long stichomythy between Creon and Ismene (from line 563 onwards). In Sophocles' extant work, such a stichomythy is never interrupted by a third character. The reason for separatism's obsessive wish to attribute the line to Antigone despite this overwhelming evidence (Jebb A 110, Müller SA 111, Kamerbeek A 115) is obvious: it would be the only verse in the whole tragedy in which Antigone gives vent to her love for Haemon.¹⁴ That would make her a complete romantic heroine (Rohdich A 105N). But if we accept the philological evidence, it is of the greatest significance that Antigone never shows any affection for Haemon. The tragic reason, suppressed by the orthodox, is that Antigone has been obliged to sacrifice her femininity to her dead brother.

Then there is the matter of that one conspicuous change in Ismene's attitude between the prologue and the second episode. In the prologue she wants Antigone to share life with her; in the second episode she longs to share Antigone's death (545). But this does not mean that Ismene has now become as heroic a death-wisher as Antigone (cf. 555, 559-60). The reason behind her proposed self-sacrifice does not differ essentially from her attitude in the prologue: without Antigone her *life* would have lost its meaning (548, 566). It is Ismene's tragedy that it is impossible for her to share Antigone's fate; despite her attempted prudence she is unable to prevent their final separation. One important reason for this fission is adduced by Antigone when she points out that Ismene has not touched (ῥίγες - 546) what Antigone has touched, i.e. the body of Polyneices. By contact with the polluted body, Antigone has come into the orbit of its contaminated power. Ismene cannot share in this power—and that is her side of the tragic division. While Antigone's hubris ends in destruction, Ismene is saved (cf. 553), but this does not mean that in this tragedy

ders (ἔχιδν' - 531). Again Antigone only appeals to Hades (Ἄϊδης 542). Creon points out the destructive aspect of this one-sidedness (575) and refers to Antigone's approaching reversal (580-81). Social relations are referred to in 531, 533, 543, 549, Winnington-Ingram SI 134, justice in 538, and insight in 557, 562, 563-64. For life/death see *infra*.

¹³ Of course it is absurd to maintain that Ismene changes her position here: she does not wish to be heroic now and she does not approve of Antigone either (Winnington-Ingram SI 133 and Rohdich A 95 contra Adams AS 55).

¹⁴ Why it should be 'perverse' to attribute the words not to the fiancée but to a prospective sister-in-law, as Dawe maintains (STS 107), remains totally unclear.

Ismenian prudence is finally cherished. After Antigone's death, Ismene is cut off from her contact with power. Her well-ordered life becomes totally insignificant: "To live, in the paradoxical logic of the play, means to die, to be nothing, to be a living cipher. That is the death that Ismene lives: not to exist, so far as the play is concerned, after line 771" (Else MA 35). Antigone's words turn out to be true: Ismene is only a kinswoman in words (543).

That Ismene herself realizes that her prudence is as one-sided as Antigone's hubris may be inferred from her words in 554, when she says: "and do I miss the mark of your fate?" (*κάμπλάκω τοῦ σοῦ μόρου*). Like *ἀμαρτάνω*, the word *ἀμπλάκω* means 'to fail, to miss the mark.' Because her prudence has not enabled her to share Antigone's fate, Ismene also misses something. She is separated from an indispensable part of herself—of Antigone as a source of power. Without power, prudent order just withers away. If this interpretation is convincing, a secondary significance may be allotted to Ismene's words in 558: "Howbeit, the offence is the same for both of us" (*Καὶ μὴν ἴση νῶν ἐστὶν ἡ ῥαμαρτία*). Besides the primary meaning that Ismene wishes to share Antigone's faults, this might mean that both sisters were compelled to live in tragic erring, the one because she had to forfeit prudence in order to be in touch with power, the other because she had to suppress awesomeness in her prudent longing for order and safety. Man's tragic position is that he has to combine Ismene's prudence with Antigone's power (cf. Molinari SA 113-14), and is intrinsically unable to accomplish such a feat. That is the reason why Ismene and Antigone cannot be separated from each other but cannot be harmonized either.

7.4. Creon and the guard

After his entrance speech, Creon is confronted by one of the guards he appointed to watch over the corpse of Polyneices (223-331). Their debate continues after the break of the first *stasimon* (384-440), now in the presence of Antigone who has been captured during her second attempt at burial. The structural opposition between Antigone and Ismene is reiterated in the opposition between Creon and the guard:¹⁵ Ismene and the guard are structurally analogous characters, who should not be disregarded as unimportant people merely trying to save their skins (Müller SA 62), but should be considered as the indispensable counterparts to human hubris. In that capacity the guard is as essential to the understanding of the human condition as awesome man is (Benardete

¹⁵ It is interesting to note that Ismene and the guard have been played by the same actor (Kamerbeek A 15).

RSA I 187). Just as without Antigone Ismene falls into insignificance, as the representative of prudence the guard is saved, but without contact with power he is merely a jester.¹⁶

The story of the prudent guard reflects the ambiguous combination of wildness and divinity in the behaviour of both Antigone and Creon. In this ambiguity the meaning of the repeated burial has to be sought. For years a discussion, as tedious as it is endless, has been dragging along on the question of why Antigone tried to bury Polyneices not once but twice (for a review of the positions cf. Johansen S 186; most recently Scodel DPB). Those who call it a weakness in the play or a theatrical inevitability are as far from the tragic meaning of repetition as those who believe that the doubling merely points to Antigone's perseverance (Kamerbeek A 29). Structuralism warns us that repetition is seldom without cosmological significance. In this case it is striking that the guard's story of the first attempt at burial should differ diametrically from his description of the second attempt. The first attempt is rendered in a terminology pointing exclusively to the divine sphere, excluding nature, whereas the second is described from a natural point of view. In both cases human action is denied. By means of the repetition, the guard is enabled to indicate the ambiguous nature, both divine and untamed, of Antigone's deeds.

With respect to the first burial the guard specifically excluded the relevance of all civilized instruments like pick-axes, mattocks and cart-wheels (249-50), but he stated that there were no traces of wild animals or dogs either (257). The chorus draws the obvious conclusion: it must be the work of a god (*θείλατον* - 278).

The second burial is in sharp contrast to the first. Like the second *stasimon*, it paints a scene of upheaval of the natural order. A whirlwind fills the air with sand, the sand belonging on the earth now covering the sky. The foliage of the woods is also marred. That we are confronted with a serious confusion of categories is clear from the terminology of pollution employed. The typhoon is called a "heavenly distress" (*οὐράνιον ἄχος* - 418), and its action on the foliage is called "outrageous" (*αἰχλίζων* - 419). The pollution of nature proves contagious: it strikes the guards with a "divine illness" (*θεῖαν νόσον* - 421).

We may expect that this polluted confusion of the cosmos has something to do with the exposed body of Polyneices. The guard explicitly refers to its dank odour (*μυδῶν* - 410; *ὀσμῆν* - 412). The pollution

¹⁶ Cf. *λάλημα* - 320; *κόμψευε* - 324. Several interpreters compare him to a Shakespearian fool (e.g. Bultmann PHA 320, Müller SA 62). On the comic effects of the guard cf. Goth SA 49-52.

emanating from the body is not only connected with Creon's refusal to bury it, but also with Antigone's abortive attempt to accord it the funeral rites. The outraging (αἰχλῶν - 419) of the foliage may be considered a transformed repetition of the outrage of seeing the exposed body (αἰχισθὲν τ' ἰδεῖν - 206), as ordered by Creon (Segal TC 160). But it should be kept in mind that the dust storm confusing cosmic order does not occur when Creon leaves the body exposed but at the moment that Antigone is about to sprinkle it with dust for the second time. Primarily the cosmic upheaval is connected to her deed. Just as Creon tried to bring about a purification, Antigone tries to bury Polyneices in order to escape contamination (ἄγος φεύγοντος - 256). But Antigone's attempt at purification is as abortive as Creon's. The dust she sprinkles on the body mirrors the dust storm which darkens the sky and will, according to the second *stasimon*, finally be the dust which smothers the Labdacids. While Antigone tries to control the pollution by sprinkling dust, the actual effect of her ritual is the transformation of the dust into a lethal force, not only destroying the Labdacids but their collateral branch as well; the medium through which this polluted power is propagated may be the evil curses (ἄρ' αὖ κακὰς - 427) Antigone utters while performing her funeral activities. Both Creon's and Antigone's efforts to purify Polyneices have failed—no other sense can be made of Tiresias' words: "a corpse unburied, unhonoured, all unhallowed" (ἄμμοιρον, ἀκτέριστον, ἀνόσιον νέκυον - 1071)—and the corpse has become a source of confusion, an intrusion of nature into civilization, a self-propagating power of destruction.

Small wonder that the guard should explicitly compare both Creon and Antigone to natural phenomena. He says that Creon raged like a winter storm (ἐχειμάσθην - 391—a repetition of the winter storm in the first *stasimon*), and he calls Antigone a bird crying aloud with a sharp wail (ὀξὺν φθόγγον - 424). In this description her going together with Polyneices is emphasized once more: in the *parode* the latter was compared to a sharply screaming eagle (ὀξεῖα κλάζων - 112). Like the birds in the first *stasimon*, Antigone will be captured. According to the guard her position now is like that of a mother bird which in her empty nest (εὐνῆς) sees her bed (λέχος) bereft of children (νεοσσῶν ὀρφανὸν) (425). The fact that Antigone's bed will stay empty and she will remain a perverted, childless mother, makes Antigone like an untamed bird unable to utter civilized language.¹⁷

But Creon's position with respect to the animal world is equally equivocal. Contrary to the prudent guard, who takes care to remain

¹⁷ In the course of the play Antigone is compared to other mothers who lose their progeny: explicitly to Niobe (823f.), implicitly to Intaphernes' wife (909f.).

within the limits of humanity, he complains that his citizens do not keep their necks under his yoke (ζυγῶ - 291). This remark is ominous. Creon is not a human being who yokes cattle (351), nor a god who yokes men (Dionysus in 955). He is a man who yokes men. His royal position has led him into confounding the natural and the divine (Goheen ISA 27).

In contrast to the moderate guard, time and again Creon demonstrates the dangerous position of the king who soars too high for human forbearance. Creon is sure of what the gods want with Polyneices (288-89). He exclusively defends the interests of Zeus of the city (287, 304), at the expense of Hades, who to him is anything but awe-inspiring, being merely a helpmeet for the polis (308 - cf. Bultmann PHA 316, Knox HT 100, Winnington-Ingram SI 127). As Creon's prudent counterpart, the guard accepts the variability of the gods, expecting that everything will happen according to the ordinances of fate (236, 328). It depends on the gods and not on man whether mortals will be saved or doomed (331). The guard is far from claiming that he knows the nature of justice (240), as Creon does (292).

Most spectacular is the opposition between Creon and the guard in the category of insight. Just like in the opposition between Antigone and Ismene, the boasting words of the 'hybrid' protagonist more than once contain ironical indications of an overturning of his intentions. The guard, on the other hand, emphasizes that he knows nothing (Οὐκ οἶδ' - 249; cf. 263, 316). He easily changes his mind, as is clear from his return after having sworn never to set eyes on Creon again (394). Contrary to the rectilinear protagonists, the guard, as a model of cautiousness, moves in circles: "For I had many halts caused by thoughts (φροντισδων), wheeling round (κυκλῶν) in my path to return" (225-26). Creon detects the cunning of this circling. He thinks the guard is fencing off his deed by a circle (κύκλω - 241). As in the case of Ismene, this circling prudence leads to safety in the maelstrom of destruction (331, 440).

Creon's thoughts are characterized by the consistency and rigidity of the haughty spirit which will not and cannot yield. Creon is convinced that he knows well (ἐξεπίσταμαι καλῶς - 293). This brings him into the orbit of man's awesomeness as described in the first *stasimon*. It is no more than natural that the guard should apply the word δεινόν to Creon twice, once just before the first *stasimon* (323) and once just after it (408), nor should it cause surprise that he describes Antigone's behaviour with the same word δεινόν (243). Because of his awesome nature, Creon justly fears the arousing of his temper (ὀργῆς - 280)—ironically the same *orge* that is called indispensable for the founding of cities in the first *stasimon* (355). The result of Creon's awesome claiming of knowledge is that these claims often come ironically true by unexpectedly returning on his own

head. This happens when, unable to appreciate that this applies to his own expectation of gain, he says that gain has often destroyed man by means of hope (221-22). The same irony occurs when Creon asserts that the chorus will be found to be both senseless and old (281)—a neat prediction of his own future (Markantonatos TIA 494)—and when he teaches the guard that through wicked desires (αἰσχροῶν λημμάτων) more men come to ruin than are saved (312-14). In the end it is the guard who is saved (440) and Creon who is ruined - through his awesome consistency.

7.5. Creon and Antigone

The direct confrontation between the protagonists in 473-525 is a transformative repetition of their antitheses in all relevant categories (Fowler PPS 152), but there is an important difference with the preceding scenes as well. Both Creon and Antigone now show how they have become increasingly isolated. Both are on the verge of being transformed from *hypsipolis* to *apolis*. Creon compares Antigone to natural phenomena applicable to himself as well. A belief in civilization's ability to check wild power is clear in his comparison of Antigone to raging horses (θυμουμένους ἵππους) which are broken to the rein (477). This is not only applicable to Antigone, but, ironically, to Creon himself as well. In both protagonists unbridled power predominates, until they are brought to heel outside the confines of civilization.

As will be expected by now, this untamedness spreads to the fundamental cosmological categories. Both protagonists reveal their one-sidedness with respect to the divine sphere (487, 519), both exclusively defend either the polis or the family (cf. Knox HT 102), and they remain one-sided regarding death and burial (524-25) and the concomitant justice (514-18). In their discussion a considerable role is played by the upheaval of the social ties between men and women. Antigone occupies the marginal position of unmarried girls (cf. *συμφεῖα* - 568, *νύμφας* - 797, 633), often compared to wild horses not yet tamed (Kamerbeek A 100, cf. Calame CF I 412). Creon fears this power where his masculinity is concerned: "I am no man, she is the man, if this victory shall rest with her" (484-85, cf. 525). This fear of an upheaval of the order of the sexes is explicitly connected by Creon with fear of Antigone's power (*χράτη* - 485)—the same power he has as the leader of the city (*χράτη* - 60, 173). Finally, Creon's remarks about Antigone's insight are again applicable to himself. He maintains that she thinks proud thoughts (*φρονεῖν μέγ'* - 479), and boasts (*ὑβρίζειν* - 480.)

The increased isolation of the two protagonists is revealed in their common claim that the other has separated himself or herself from the

citizens' approval. Creon is convinced that Antigone defends her cause as the only Cadmean (μούνη τῶνδε Καδμείων – 508, cf. 510) whereas Antigone believes that the chorus is on her side and merely feigns to support Creon: they are dogs with their tails between their legs (ὑπάλλουσι – 509). Ironically, this bestialization of the chorus brings Antigone nearer to Creon and separates her from the representatives of civilization (Segal TC 163).

Antigone's isolation is sardonically confirmed in her statement in line 523: "it is my nature (ἔφυν) not to join in hating (συνέχθειν), but in loving (συμφιλεῖν)." Of course interpretations maintaining that a gap of centuries is bridged here and that Matthew's higher ethics are being announced (Flacelière LG 286) may be discarded as *curiosa*. Usually it is stressed that Antigone here confines her affection to her family members, at the expense of the polis,¹⁸ but there is more to be said. Her expression is so ironic that it means the opposite of what she intended: not only has Antigone forsaken sexual love, and thereby husband and children, she has also proved herself a perfect hater of her family in the persons of Creon and Ismene (Winnington-Ingram SI 135). The only tie left to her is that with her deceased family members—and that tie will soon be severed as well. If it is Antigone's nature to join in love, she has transgressed her nature in almost every possible way. Both Creon and Antigone have now become maniacs, living in their idiosyncratic worlds. Their isolation is a preparation for their final sacrifice on behalf of the city.

7.6. Haemon, Creon and Antigone

With the appearance of Haemon in the third episode a new element is emphasized in the reiteration of structural oppositions between Antigone and Creon. The significance of this element may be assessed by following Haemon's transformations throughout the third episode (631-780) and from the messenger's account of the three characters' final meeting in the crypt (1206-43). The most important aspect of Haemon's appearance is that he represents a third cosmological category apart from the family and the city. He is a model of the power of Eros (Kitto SDP 36, Winnington-Ingram SI 92). As we know from the third *stasimon*, Eros is not only a category, he is also the power undermining all categorical order. This power is shown in Haemon's development from an extremely prudent son and citizen to a raving lunatic committing suicide in Antigone's crypt after an abortive attempt at patricide. Haemon's course il-

¹⁸ E.g. Reinhardt S 88, Kirkwood SSD 126, Knox HT 81-82 (contrary to Knox HT 116).

illustrates the awesome power of Eros, not only in his own life, but also in the lives of Creon and Antigone. They are possessed by Eros as well, but by an Eros opposite to that of Haemon.

The crypt into which Antigone is brought, to which Creon returns, and in which Haemon commits suicide, is a veritable living contradiction. On the one hand it is a natural place: it is made of stone (774, 1204) and is situated in a region "where the path is empty of mortals" (773). On the other hand it is the scene of perverted life, of a purificatory execution, of a funeral train which is also a wedding procession, and of a ritual consummation of marriage which is also a double suicide. The rocky vault illustrates the contradictory combination of wildness and order which all three participants in the scene represent, and which is characteristic of civilized life in general.

Haemon expostulates with his father on his natural wildness, by comparing him to nature, lifeless as well as living: "You can see, beside the wintry torrent's course (*βελθροισι χειμάρροισι*) how the trees that yield to it (*ὕπτεται*) save (*ἐκσώζεται*) every twig, while the stiff-necked (*τὰ δ' ἀντιτείνοντ'*) perish root and branch. Even thus he who keeps the sheet of his sail taut and never slackens it (*ὕπτεται μηδέν*), turns his boat upside down and finishes his voyage with his keel uppermost" (712-17). Here we are confronted with Creon's untamed power as a Sophoclean hero. This power prevents him from yielding, it makes him consistent in his deeds, but it is precisely this consistence that leads him outside civilized control.¹⁹

The irony of the events is that, despite his prudent remarks, Haemon himself will undergo a similar intrusion of untamed nature into his orbit (Segal TC 159, 165). When Creon approaches the crypt he hears Haemon's voice greeting him like a dog (*σάλει* - 1214), and he sees him staring with wild eyes (*ἀγρίους ὄσσοισι* - 1231) (Goheen ISA 34). Haemon has become infected with Antigone's rawness and his father's temper. All three characters show their wildness in their relationships with the gods. Antigone is only able to worship Hades (777). In a culmination of hubris, Creon calls this labour lost (*πόνος περισσός* - 780). Creon has to neglect the Zeus of kinship (*Δία Εὐναιμον* - 658-59; note the ironical pun on Haemon's name). Haemon reproaches his father with trampling on the gods' honours (*πατῶν* - 745). Of course Haemon's disapprobation concerns the nether gods (cf. 749), but Eros is hidden in his words as well (Rohdich A 132). Through his opposition to Haemon's love, it becomes clear that Creon does not only have to deny the claims of the Penates, but those of Eros as well. In this respect he is Antigone's double.

¹⁹ The reading of manuscript A, *ἐγχερατης*, is also favoured by Kamerbeek A 135 (contra Jebb A 132 and Dawe D 71).

The implication is that the web of differences between kinship, marriage and citizenship is now utterly confused. Creon has to defend the interests of the city, implying that he has to condemn Haemon's devotion to love and a woman: "do not thou, my son, at pleasure's beck, dethrone thy reason (τὰς φρένας) for a woman's sake" (648). Creon's predicament is that in his royal position he cannot make himself out a liar to his people (657-58) by letting Antigone go free for Haemon's sake. The awesome consequence of his consistency is that he has to break his son's engagement, which is the more ironic because this robs Creon of any possibility of continuing his own race, Haemon being its last offshoot (νέατον γέννημ' - 627). It is not abominable rudeness when Creon utters his expectation that there will be other fields for Haemon to plough (569). This was a common metaphor, which cannot conceal Creon's tragic position however: Antigone is alive while he has to thwart her procreative power.

When Creon maintains that his powers should be worshipped (τὰς ἐμὰς ἀρχὰς σέβων - 744), again he is not abusing his royal position, but pointing out his prerogatives, yet his identification with the city is dangerous. The same is true of his remark that a ruler should be obeyed in small things, in just things, and in their opposites (667). This remark is not a sign of baseness (Bultmann PHA 319) but a reference to Solon (Fr 27W) which is common in classical sources (Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 16). Small wonder that the chorus should still approve of Creon (681-82)(Alexanderson SCA 95), and that even Haemon has to admit that his father is right (685-86, cf. Jebb A 129). But Creon's power contains the danger of isolation. The irony is that the king's total identification with the city ends in his complete isolation from its citizens. This isolation becomes clear in Creon's question whether the city is not held to be the ruler's (κρατοῦντος - 738; note the emphasis on power). By this statement, Creon shows himself to be totally alone (μόνος). He has become the ruler of a desert (ἐρήμης - 739), just as Antigone is totally deserted (μούνῃ - 508, μόνῃν - 656, ἔρημος - 919, cf. 773). Substitutes for the city which have become isolated as a consequence of their lofty position are excellent candidates to substitute for the negative aspects of the city, i.e. to act as its scapegoats.

But what of Haemon's relationship to Antigone? In his remarks about his fiancée, separatism has found occasion to justify its claim that Antigone defends an essentially just cause (Jebb A xxiii/iv). Creon had not hidden his contempt for her deed. He remarked that Antigone was the only one in the city who rebelled, transgressing (ὑπερβὰς - 663), violating the laws (νόμους βιάζεται - 663), dictating to those in power (ἐπιτάσσειν is usually applied to a master ordering his slave - Jebb A 126). Now Haemon presents us with a surprising revelation. According to him the

citizens hold that Antigone deserves golden honour (699) for her most glorious deeds (ἔργων εὐκλειεστάτων - 695). But praising Antigone does not necessarily imply disagreement with Creon's law, let alone agreement with its violation (Bieler AS 11, Benardete RSA II 37). The citizens only admire Antigone because she cared about her brother (696-98). A prudent citizen would have accepted Creon's authority at the same time—and that is what the chorus does (725), just like Ismene and the guard. A second point is that Haemon is speaking from his specific one-sidedness. We may expect the citizens' admiration for Antigone to be mingled with horror at the awesomeness of her deed—an aspect which Haemon naturally suppresses, but which the chorus continues to expound until Antigone's death. Then it calls her both god-like and an example of self-willed untamed temper (837, 875). Antigone is as awesome a transgressor of all social boundaries as are her structural counterparts Haemon and Creon.

Through Haemon's love for Antigone all three opponents become infected with the undermining force of Eros who sides with the great ordinances (798-99) as indiscriminate power (Musurillo LD 53). In the beginning of his discussion with his father Haemon tries to be prudent by combining his endeavour to save Antigone with respect for his father (Πάτερ, σός εἰμι - 635) and the city. But soon he becomes gripped by the dangerous temper the chorus ascribed to him (ὀργῆς - 766). In order to press his suit he has to be exclusive, just like Antigone and Creon were. He is forced to suppress the other aspects of the web of social ties. For the sake of a woman he is compelled to undermine his father's and his king's authority. The culmination of his temperamental transgressing is the spitting scene. Creon has asked his son to spit out his fiancée as a purification on behalf of the polis (πύσας - 653). But in the end Haemon spits on his father and his king (πύσας - 1232) in an outbreak of destructive Eros (Kitto GT 128, Rohdich A 218).

What Antigone and Creon discover to their detriment is experienced by Haemon as well, i.e. that one-sidedness in favour of one category soon ends in the destruction of one's adherence to that same category. The scene in the crypt turns out to be a perverted marriage rite in which Haemon undermines his own love, at the same time revealing Antigone's one-sided love of death, and Creon's disregard for sexual passion. The perverted wedding has been prepared carefully. Unwittingly, Creon had pointed to it in several remarks, for example when he said to Haemon: "it will be a cold embrace (ψυχρὸν παραγάλλισμα) when she shares your bed in your house" (650 - compare Ismene's reference to Antigone's warm heart for cold things in 88). The same dramatic irony permeates his remark to Antigone that she should find a groom in the house of

Hades (654), and when he warns Haemon: "you shall never marry her while she is still alive" (750).

The consummation of the macabre wedding is an inverse nuptial rite (τὰ νυμφικὰ τέλη - 1240-41). The house they are marrying in is not a house but a natural abode which is also the house of Hades (1241). The bed they lie in is a bed of stone (1204-05). Haemon's embrace of Antigone is unnatural. He lies with her (κεῖται—with the sexual connotation which also characterized Antigone's remark that she would always lie with Polyneices - 73), but the sexual contact is the touch of death—it is "corpse enfolding corpse" (1240). Instead of making Antigone pregnant with his fertile semen, Haemon sends forth from his mouth a swift stream of deadly drops (1238-39) (Segal TC 181, 189). The result of the inverse nuptials is not a fusion of the houses of Oedipus and Creon in a descendant, but a lethal fusion of the last roots of both houses in a self-destructive embrace.

Does this blood-stained wedding imply that Creon is totally wrong about the categories of death and justice when he orders that Antigone should be buried alive? Not so. As the city's representative, Creon had to take action against the disorder resulting from Antigone's deed. Repeatedly he points out the disorder she has caused (ἄκοσμα - 660, ἄκοσμοῦντας - 730), and the order he has to reinstate (τοῖς κοσμουμένοις - 677). The gravity of the disorder is clear from the pollutions which have now become ubiquitous.

Because of the cosmic upheaval in all relevant categories resulting from her deed, Creon calls Antigone an ulcer (ἔλκος - 652), an illness (νόσος - 732) and a hateful object (μῖσος - 760). This pollution is primarily the consequence of her contact with Polyneices. Creon distinguishes Antigone from Ismene who is released because she has not touched the body (μὴ θιγοῦσαν - 771—the same argument that Antigone employed against Ismene [μὴ ῥθιγες - 546]). Because of his close contact with Antigone the pollution has spread to Haemon as well, who is described by his father as a "contaminated character" (μιαρὸν ἦθος - 746). That Creon's fear of this pollution is no idle whim is amply confirmed by the following events. Haemon becomes totally infected with the wild ways of the Labdacids. His attempt to kill his father may be considered a reflection of Oedipus' patricide (Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 5), and his death by his own hand (αὐτόχειρ - 1175) reminds us of the series of Labdacid suicides (Iocaste, Polyneices, Eteocles, Antigone). The pollution spreads even further, as can be inferred from Haemon's words about Antigone: "in death she will destroy another" (751). This may be a dark warning of his impending attempt at patricide, but may also point to his suicide. Finally it refers to the fate of Creon, who through the contagious power of Antigone's

death and of his son's oath will finally become a living corpse (1167).

It is in this climate of terror of pollution that we have to understand Antigone's execution. That Creon should not fulfil his threat to have the perpetrator stoned to death (36), but buries Antigone alive, is not a needless act of cruelty, as separatists maintain (Müller SA 162), or an act prompted by fear of the citizens' disobedience (e.g. Knox HT 72, Rosivach TWA 23). That is idle psychological speculation (Patzer HHS 57, Benardete RSA II 44). Creon fears for the safety of Thebes (776). His attempt to control ambiguity by the ritual exposure of Polyneices has been thwarted by Antigone, and this deed has infected the whole cosmos, including the city. There is only one course open to Creon: he has to institute an even more dangerous ritual of controlled ambiguity in order to redress the cosmic balance. Now he reverses his previous ritual: whereas formerly he kept a dead body above the earth, now he buries a living body in the earth: "I will hide her living in a rocky vault" (774). This act constitutes a total confusion of life and death, of above and below, of Olympus and Hades, of marriage and burial, of procreation and extinction. But Creon tries to use this power for his own benefit by separating its detrimental effects from its beneficial effects. He tries to stop the polluting aspect of power by not touching Antigone as she had touched Polyneices: she is buried alive. Two further ritual measures of separation are added: Creon offers Antigone some food and takes her outside the bounds of civilization.

Before we condemn Creon, we should realize that a normal execution of Antigone (for example by stoning, as was announced earlier) was out of the question: it would have resulted in an uncontrollable pollution. First of all, Antigone is a member of the royal house and as such part of Thebes itself (Calder III SPT 400N); second, she has been dangerously polluted by her contact with Polyneices (Benardete RSA II 44); and finally, she is Creon's kinswoman. For the Greek family, burial alive was a possibility to execute one of its members without fear of further contamination.

That Creon institutes a ritual of controlled ambiguity is evident from his employment of the word ἄγος in 775. Normally this word means 'pollution,' but here it points to a ritual employment of pollution. As such, it has the reversed meaning of expiation here (Kamerbeek A 143, Jebb A 144). Creon is convinced that as a consequence of this ritual the whole city will be cleansed of the pollution (μίσσμα - 776). How near this ritual is to a ritual of scapegoat selection may be seen from Creon's remark that by taking Antigone far away from the city he and his citizens will stay unsullied by her contamination (Ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἄγνοί τοῦτι τήνδε τὴν χόρην - 889); note the religious tone of ἄγνοί: it means 'ritually pure,

holy'. Creon's acts with respect to the categories of life/death and justice are not the wanton outbursts of a base tyrant, but constitute a desperate attempt at controlling pollution in a totally anomalous universe.

From the foregoing discussion it will have become evident that all three major characters share in excessive temper (ὀργῆς - 766: chorus about Haemon; θρασύς - 752: Creon about Haemon; δεινόν - 690: Haemon to Creon; ἀβουλίαν - 1242: messenger about Haemon). Creon's reaction to Haemon's anger: "Let him do and think more than is appropriate to man" (φρονεῖτω μείζον ἢ κατ' ἄνδρ' ἰών - 768), applies to all these characters. By then, Haemon has paid the price for his haughtiness. The downfall of the man who said he would have better knowledge than seers have (Creon in 631) cannot be far away. The same may be said of the woman who goes on acting in what she herself calls thoughtlessness. The chorus's prudent advice to acknowledge that both sides (Creon and Haemon) are right, that truth is double-natured (διπλᾶ), and that both sides should learn from each other (μαθεῖν - 725) is as commendable as it is unrealistic.

7.7. Antigone's reversal

The problem that the fourth episode, Antigone's lament, poses for the separatists is that it would be unacceptable if the immaculate heroine should undergo a reversal, while at the same time it has to be acknowledged that somehow Antigone does change,²⁰ a problem they try to solve by minimizing the importance of the reversal. Antigone's doubts and complaints are considered the obvious reactions of a young girl facing execution, but according to separatism this vacillation does not really affect her firm principles (e.g. Linforth AC 251, Müller SA 183). This conception has its mirror-image as well: some interpreters maintain that Antigone's real character and motivation are only revealed in the *kommos* (e.g. Knox HT 106-07). Both forms of separatism share the ideal of an unbroken Antigone. The price they have to pay is that one part of Antigone has to be exorcized as mere appearance. Either the *kommos* or the early episodes are believed to reveal the true Antigone, one at the expense of the other.²¹

Another separation which has to be carried out by the orthodox is expunging (part of) the verses 904-20. Acceptance of these verses would compel the separatists to revise their conception of Antigone as a representative of unstained justice. That is why they have to reject lines,

²⁰ E.g. Knox HT 103, Müller SA 183, Rohdich A 11, Winnington-Ingram SI 138-39.

²¹ For an excellent discussion of the problems inherent in these interpretations see Rohdich A 11-19.

despite Aristotle's quoting them (Rhet 1417a 28-32), despite their Sophoclean style (Szelezák BDS 110-11), and despite their echoing other words in the tragedy (Kirkwood SSD 239-40, Segal TC 153); or if they do not reject them, separatists are at the least obliged to minimize their importance.

The harmonizing conception does not need these separations. It acknowledges Antigone's reversal, and has no problems with the verses 904-20. The Hegelians recognize Antigone's reversal because to them it is essential that in the end she should accept the necessity of transcending both her own one-sidedness and Creon's in a higher harmony. This is quite clear in Rohdich's variant of the Hegelian conception. According to Rohdich, Antigone previously only accepted death and her family, whereas in the *kommos* she utters a hymn to life which is an affirmation of the polis as well (though not of Creon) (A 178). Rohdich takes one step in the direction of tragic ambiguity when he maintains that, despite her *anagnorisis* Antigone retains something of her stubborn wildness, but he becomes harmonizing again when he says that this implies that, according to the cosmology of the tragedy, Antigone is therefore unable to acknowledge the true meaning of the events. The true meaning would be that Antigone's destruction means the restoration of cosmic order (A 184).²²

In Rohdich's interpretation, Antigone continues to live an illusion in so far as she is unable to see the truth that the order of being can be accepted (note that this is Rohdich's conception of the cosmology of the tragedy and does not coincide with his own ideas on cosmology). This brings him close to the second harmonizing strategy, that of acceptance, consisting of the idea that Antigone does not transcend her one-sidedness, but simply accepts the cosmological state of affairs as it is. According to Else, for example, in her *kommos* Antigone is "ready to accept reality whatever it may be; in this life or the next" (Else MA 66). In the same vein Jens maintains that Antigone returns into the order of existence (AI 308).

But, separatism notwithstanding, it is undeniable that Antigone undergoes a reversal in all six cosmological categories and that lines 904-20 are indispensable to the understanding of her position.

²² Das Unvermögen, in dem der Text sie hielt, die Erkenntnis ihres Unrechts klar zu vollziehen, ihren Untergang als notwendige Restauration der Weltordnung zu durchschauen und sich so an deren dialektisches Wesen leidend zwar, aber einsichtig zu akkomodieren, weist auf die auch im Angesicht des Todes unverlorene Haltung, die sophokleische Helden auszuzeichnen pflegt: den vom Leben diktierten Bedingungen nicht weichen zu können [...]

Throughout the first part of the tragedy Antigone consistently refuses to recognize the legitimacy of remarks by characters like Ismene, Creon and the chorus, or to recognize that through her being a Labdacid as well as through her own deed she shares in uncivilized power. She continues to speak of the famous Labdacids, ignoring their wild side. But in the *kommos* the situation is dramatically changed. Her ambiguous status on the verge of nature and culture is now seen in her imprisonment in the rocky bridal chamber. This genuine proximity to nature is accompanied by a reversal in her attitude. Antigone now vainly regrets that her only witnesses are natural: the sources of the river Dirce (842) and the Theban soil (843) (Knox HT 34). She suffers in her confused position between nature and culture. This is apparent in her comparison of herself to Niobe. This daughter of Tantalus was punished for her hubristic boasting by being overgrown by a rocky outcropping (827). She is a complete marginal between nature and civilization. Contrary to man in the first *stasimon*, she is exposed to rain (ὄμβρω - 828) and snow (χιών - 830) (Segal TC 168). It is not Niobe who subdues nature, but nature that domesticates her (δάμασεν - 827), the word δάμασεν alluding to Niobe's being married to nature. Niobe's position is especially horrible because she is not completely reduced to a natural state: the rain bedews her bosom as tears from her weeping brows, the words ὄφρῦς (brow, crag) and δειράς (breast, ridge) being applicable to both mountains and women. Despite her recognition of the similarity of her position to Niobe's, Antigone does not accept her situation. She continues to bewail both her own fate and Niobe's.

Previously, Antigone had consistently neglected the gods of the city. She was also convinced that the nether gods were unreservedly on her side. This picture now undergoes a true metamorphosis. Antigone acknowledges the divinity of the gods of the polis (θεῶν πατρώων - 839-40) and of the Theban race (938) (Rohdich A 151), nor does she contest the chorus's conclusion that her pious deed (Σέβειν) was only a particular, one-sided form of piety (εὐσέβειά τις - 872), because transgression against the powers that be (whether Creon or Zeus - McDevitt KSA 142) is intolerable. It is also obvious in the *kommos* that Antigone has become embittered against the nether gods. It is against her wishes that she has to marry the god Acheron (Ἀχέροντι νυμφεύσω - 816). The fact that she is now married to a rock and to a god (cf. 833), and has thereby in a sense obtained what she had always longed for, is now unacceptable to her. She fiercely rejects the chorus's equating her with a goddess, and believes that in this way the chorus is scorning her (839-41). The reason is that in her last hour Antigone wishes to return to the human measure she left behind in her semi-divinity and semi-bestiality.

This recognition of her former exclusiveness and ambiguity brings Antigone no solace at all. She is totally divided. To what god should she, wretched one, turn? (cf. 922-23). The position of holy evil-doer that she accepted in an effervescent mood (79) is now an unbearable doom: "By practising piety I have earned impiety" (τὴν δυσσέβειαν εὐσεβοῦς' ἐκτησάμην - 924). Jebb translates: "by piety I have earned the name of impious" (accepted by Müller SA 197). In this view, Antigone's tragic predicament is soothed by exorcizing her impiety into mere appearance (Rohdich A 181N). However, the realization of her impiety does not bring harmony to this vexed soul. Despite her insight into the divine world and her own ambiguous position in it, she is unable to recede from her haughty position. She proudly adds that nevertheless she worshipped piety (τὴν εὐσεβίαν σεβίσασα - 943). It is not tragic to believe that we must choose between Antigone's piety and impiety (Knox HT 106). Tragedy means the realization of man's impiety in the whole of the cosmos, together with the equally indispensable claim to the holy nature of his own principles.

Antigone's reversal consists of recognizing that she has been one-sided, and that her own side was internally conflicting and ambiguous, but that despite these recognitions she is at the same time unable to renounce her previous principles. Despite her tragic insight in the combined horror and divinity of her deeds, she is intrinsically unable to recede from her position. Therefore her tragic insight does not imply acceptance. Antigone is unable to bear the reality of the divided cosmos. Her inability to accept the cosmos is not an illusion: Antigone's insight is the true insight that, though holy, the cosmos is unbearable to human beings, who are nevertheless bound to it. Tragic insight is the insight that the cosmos is divine order, yet unacceptable.

During her conflict with Creon, Antigone persistently neglected the interests of the polis, of her living kinsmen, and of her intended marriage for the sake of her deceased brother. She was convinced that caring for Polyneices was no more than her pure duty, and she accepted the complete isolation ensuing. This consistent attitude is reversed in the *kommós*. Antigone now acknowledges her one-sidedness with respect to all the ties that she formerly rejected. Twice she appeals to the polis (Ἦ πόλις - 842; Ἦ γῆς Θήβης ἄστυ πατρώον - 937), and for the first time she recognizes the members of the chorus as representatives of the city (806, cf. 841, 940) (Patzer HHS 50, Winnington-Ingram SI 141). She also admits that she acted violently against the citizens (βίᾳ πολιτῶν - 907—a first reiteration of words spoken by Ismene) (Rohdich A 171). For the first time Antigone also mourns the absence of living relatives (847, 882). Whereas in the past she was only in love with death (88, 220), she now accepts the

importance of marriage. Repeatedly she complains of the fact that she has to die unmarried, without husband or children (813-14, 867, 876, 917-18)(Mc Devitt KSA 136), also implying a belated recognition of her feminine nature (Pomeroy GWW 101). During the *kommós*, Antigone's isolation loses its splendour as well. She complains that she is forlorn of *philoí* in all meanings (ἔρημος πρὸς φίλων - 919, cf. ἄφιλος - 876). Her complaint of total isolation is expressed in her description of herself as a metic (μέτοιχος - 852, 868). Contrary to Jebb (A 156), who translates the concept as "dweller," Knox (HT 114) rightly argues that the connection with the marginality of metics should not be disregarded (Creon applies the word μετοιχίας to Antigone - 890).

The crowning irony is the fact that her attitude towards Polyneices should have undergone a marked change as well. Whereas previously Antigone emphasized her fusion with her brother, now she memorizes his ill-starred marriage (870). She reproaches him bitterly for being the person who will kill her: "in thy death thou hast undone my life" (θανὼν ἔτ' οὔσαν κατήναρές με - 871). Antigone now even doubts whether she has really served the interests of her family. For the first time she echoes Ismene's remark (58-59) that she would die an evil death, being the last of her lineage (895-96). As she realizes too late, her refusal to marry and to procreate has led to the extinction of her family. Unmarried (ἄγαμος) and accursed (ἀραῖος) she joins her dead relatives as a metic (867-68).

Again Antigone's recognition is no sign of resignation. She is unable to abandon the hope that Polyneices and the rest of her family will receive her favourably (898-903). Despite her new insight Antigone continues to be a human being, prompted by the hope which is sometimes an advantage, and sometimes a force of destruction.

Before, Antigone rejected life in favour of an absolute preference for death (72, 97). She considered it a gain to die before her time and boasted that she was dead already. Now her wishes have been ironically fulfilled in the crypt. She is the only mortal to go down to Hades alive (821-22, cf. Segal TC 168, Rohdich A 145). Her wish to please the inhabitants of Hades and to lie there forever is fulfilled as well (Jost AE 135), but now it is unbearable to Antigone to be a living corpse. Her former statement that it was a gain to die before her time is almost literally reversed when she complains that the most miserable aspect of her death is that she should die "before the term of my life is spent" (πρίν μοι μοῖραν ἐξήκειν βίου - 896)(Jens AI 302, Hester LPA 7). Niobe's position between life and death (cf. McDevitt KSA 138, Rohdich A 147), which Antigone had previously claimed, she now refers to as a most dreadful way of dying (λυγροτάταν ὀλέσθαι - 823).

That Antigone remains unable to accept either life or death is shown

in her last act—her suicide. When the chorus unwittingly predicts her death by maintaining that she is descending into Hades “self-governing” (αὐτόνομος) and “living” (ζῶσα) (821-22) it is not, in a romantic-separative way, praising Antigone’s autonomy (Knox SP 32-33 contra Jebb A 151). The compound with αὐτός points forward to Antigone’s suicide as a last spasm of the awesome self-will of the Labdacids. Like her mother Iocaste, whose suicide Ismene referred to as a pollution of life (λωβᾶται βίον – 54), Antigone commits a last polluting act. But this final pollution will turn out to guarantee the life of the polis, because it is the last of the Labdacids who has here eradicated their contaminating power by an ultimate self-pollution.

In the category of justice Antigone’s position is as tragically complicated as it is in the other categories. She is unable to deny the chorus’s conclusion: “Rushing forward to the utmost verge of daring (Προβᾶς ἐπ’ ἔσχατον θράσους) you have fallen hard [or far], my child (προσέπειες, ὦ τέκνον, πολύ), against the throne where justice sits on high (ὕψηλὸν ἐς Δίκας βάθρον)” (853-55). It is a distortion to maintain, as Lesky does, that here the chorus is praising Antigone as a suppliant who has thrown herself at the feet of justice (ZSI 92-95).²³ This interpretation makes it incomprehensible that the chorus should point out Antigone’s daring (θράσους – 853; Else MA 77, Rohdich A 153). In the light of this daring the verbal form προσέπειες should be understood as expressing a transgression (cf. OC 157). Antigone’s transgressions are recalled by opposing the loftiness of Dike to the Dike of the nether world to which Antigone previously appealed (Winnington-Ingram SI 142), and by opposing this same loftiness to the futility of mortal ideas on justice (Rohdich A 154). Antigone does not contest this conclusion—she recognizes that she violated the citizens’ principles (βίᾳ πολιτῶν – 907).

And she has become cognizant of the workings of the law of talion as well. The chorus links her transgression against justice up with the penalty she has to pay for her father’s deeds (856). Antigone now recognizes her accursedness (ἄραϊος – 867; Kamerbeek A 155), especially in its connection with the incest of Oedipus and Iocaste (864-66). As she states, this made her wretched by nature (ταλαίφρων ἔφυν – 866— another echo of Ismene’s warnings [39]; Benardete RSA I 154-55, Else MA 65). When she describes her fate as χάριστα (895), she is not only referring to her unhappiness, but to her hereditary evil nature as well. Therefore her bitterest thought is the thrice-ploughed doom of the famous Labdacids (857-61).

²³ Kamerbeek A 152-53, Rohdich A 152N, Winnington-Ingram SI 141N.

Nevertheless Antigone remains unable to accept the inexorable workings of talion. Despite her recognition of its divine nature, she perseveres in her conviction that the wise would say that she justly honoured her brother (904). Again she shows her totally divided position. Though their one-sidedness is revealed, Antigone is unable to renounce her principles.

Those who reject lines 904-20, because in them Antigone would distort her own divine principles (Jebb A 259), are wrong. From the beginning Antigone's principle was specific; in this respect she did not change. The *kommos* only reveals her principle's awful one-sidedness. It was not unbearable to Antigone to leave humans in general unburied: she specifically stated that she could not leave her *brother* unburied (466-67: τὸν ἐξ ἐμῆς μητρὸς θανόντ') (Kitto GT 127, Winnington-Ingram SI 131). In the *kommos* Antigone merely sketches the consequences of her former position: neither as mother nor as spouse would she have acted as she did (905-06)—only her brother is irreplaceable to her. This choice is as remarkable as is that of the queen in the passage of Herodotus from which Antigone's statement is borrowed (Hdt 3.119; cf. Szlezák BDS 113, Jebb A 260, Sourvinou-Inwood ACM 5-6). Her devotion to her brother prompted her to forsake her feminine *ergon* of procreation.

Antigone's predicament is that for Polyneices' sake she is unable to forsake this principle, while she also has to accept the workings of divine law. This leads her to the desperate question: ποῖαν παρεξέλθοῦσα δαιμόνων δίχην; (921). Contrary to what Jebb supposes in his translation: "And what law of heaven have I transgressed?" this is not necessarily a declaration of innocence. The interrogative pronoun ποῖος does not always mean the same as τίς. Another translation is: "What kind of law is this law of the gods which I have transgressed?" (Rohdich A 181), in which Antigone does not necessarily deny the justice of the gods. She acknowledges that she has transgressed divine law, but is unable to agree with this law, because she is unable to abandon Polyneices. Her position is an inextricable interweaving of respect and disrespect for divine order.

Antigone's tragic position is most poignantly developed in the category of insight. Her comparison of herself to Niobe also brings her into the orbit of Niobe's hubris. By way of this comparison she admits her excessiveness (Coleman CSA 17). This is confirmed by Antigone herself: "if these things are pleasing (καλά) to the gods, through suffering (παθόντες) I may confess (ξυγγνώμην) that I have erred (ἡμαρτηρότες)" (925-26). Of course there is no reason why the events should not be pleasing to the gods. Antigone points out that a god leads her to her rest (811, 832-33). Here she confesses her faith in the law of talion: the fact that she is suffering is sufficient proof of the fact that she has sinned.

Despite this *anagnorisis* Antigone is unable to accept the order as it is—

in her next words she is still maintaining that her adversaries have acted unjustly towards her. She predicts the further course of the tragedy in the hope that they will undergo the same evil fate as she does. This points to the fact that Antigone's self-willed temper (αὐτόγνωτος... ὄργά - 875) has not left her. As the chorus points out, she is still possessed by the same storm-gusts of the soul (ἀνέμων... ψυχῆς ῥίπαι - 929-30). Despite her avowal of her error, Antigone is unable to depart from her untamed nature. Until her death she remains divided. There is no trace of harmony. Antigone is unable to accept reality as it is. There are no grounds for expecting a future harmony of a higher order either.

7.8. Creon's reversal

Creon's reversal, which no interpreter denies, is a repetition of Antigone's, although not an exact replica. In their repetition, the reversals are divergent. The first divergence consists of the fact that Antigone's starting point is antipodal to Creon's. Antigone begins with a decision which is approved by nobody but herself, whereas Creon's course starts with a decision which has found universal acclaim. Because the protagonists' starting points are opposed, the emphasis during their downfall is different. In Antigone's case her semi-divinity is discovered as the counterpart to her untamed nature; in Creon's case his tragic error is revealed as the counterpart to his city-saving power. It would be a separative error either to confine Antigone to her semi-divine state or to confine Creon to his erring. The beginning and end of the protagonists' lives cannot be separated, though they cannot be harmonized either.

The second divergence consists in the fact that, contrary to Antigone (who, despite her tragic insight, is unable to yield to necessity), Creon finally tries to give up completely his adherence to his earlier decisions. But his attempt to yield turns out as ineffective as Antigone's tenacity. In both cases, destruction is inevitable. In so far as in their repetitive downfall Creon and Antigone represent aspects of human nature, they show man's predicament, which is that perseverance as well as compliance are impotent in preventing his decline. (The idea that Creon is not a Sophoclean protagonist because he finally yields (Knox HT 68, 72-75, Müller SA 12-13) is untenable—characters like Oedipus (OT 651, 1516) and Philoctetes (Ph 1447) yield no less than Creon—cf. Bremer H 140N, Hogan PA 100N).

In the fifth episode Tiresias confronts Creon with the hideous consequences of his ineffectual rituals. His double confusion of nature and civilization has exceeded its ritual limits and spread to the whole cosmos. Tiresias' augural birds are vehicles of the pollution. They have become

contaminated by tasting the fatness of murderous blood. The lethal power of the pollution is rendered in the word "murderous" (ἀνδροφθόρου – 1022). This does not only refer to the violence of Polyneices' death (Jebb A 183, Kamerbeek A 175), but to an active power of killing as well (cf. ἀνδροφθόρου in Soph Ph 266-67). Through the lethal contagion the birds have become similar to Polyneices as he was described in the *parode*. They are rending each other with murderous talons (1003), they are screaming with rage, their wings are whirring, they have become barbarian (βεβαρβαρωμένω – 1002), like the shrill-screaming eagle Polyneices who winged over Thebes and tried to fill his beak with its blood.

On all sides the perverted birds intrude upon the confines of civilization. They bring the rotting pieces of Polyneices' flesh to the altars and to the city's hearths—an unholy smell (ἀνόσιον ὄσμην – 1083). The result is that the avenging Erinyes break loose, threatening Creon's family and the whole city (1075). This leads Creon to recognize his wildness. He hurriedly proceeds into nature with the implements of civilization (1109), first to the furthest part of the plain (1197) where Polyneices lies, in order to wash and burn him, and then to the rocky marriage-chamber to set Antigone free. His intention is purificatory—and with Polyneices Creon appears to succeed. But with Antigone his purificatory intention again fails. The pollution has already spread to Creon's whole family and to himself. In their turn they have become similar to the polluted birds. Like the birds they utter evil cries (Haemon: φθόγγος – 1214, 1218, Eurydice: φθόγγος οἰκείου κακοῦ – 1187; cf. 1001). Creon himself flies up like a bird in fear (ἀνέπταν φόβω – 1307).

After Haemon's suicide Creon realizes the wildness of his behaviour: a god has hurled him into wild roads (ἀγρίαις ὁδοῖς – 1274). These roads, mirroring the uncivilized road along which Antigone was borne to her crypt, return when Creon in the end demands to be borne out of the way (1321, cf. 1339). When Creon, like a scapegoat, is led into the uncivilized roads leading out of the city, the order of the city is apparently restored.²⁴

The polluting power of the birds and dogs who have touched the remains of Polyneices immediately affects the divine realm. They defile the altars with morsels of the corpse. These pieces of carrion on the altars are like pieces of sacrificial meat (Benardete RSA III 161) and indicate the total collapse of divine order. Animals are offering human flesh to the gods. The consequence is that the gods no longer accept prayers (λιτάς) or offerings (μηρίων φλόγα – 1019-20). Like the birds, Tiresias' unsuc-

²⁴ Where Creon goes at the end of the tragedy is a matter of debate. Jebb, who opts for the palace (A 237), himself points to the similarity between l. 1321 and OT 1340 (A 233), which beyond doubt refers to Oedipus' exile.

cessful sacrifice reflects Creon's treatment of the Labdacids, the rotting moisture (μυδῶσα κηκίς) trickling forth from the thigh-bones (1008) reflects Polyneices' rotting corpse. The undue exposure of the thigh-bones echoes the corpse's undue exposure (Burkert OS 20). The rotting mass smokes and sputters (1008-09)—apparently the unholy smell which the birds had brought to the city now rises from the altar to heaven (Segal TC 174). Finally the melting away (ἐτήκετο - 1008) of the sacrificial meat may reflect the melting away of Antigone's double Niobe (ταχομέναν) and Cleopatra's offspring (ταχόμενοι - 977). The result of the distorted ritual is that, like the incomprehensible cries of Antigone and Polyneices, the birds are no longer understandable (1001f., 1021). Soothsayings from the unfathomable rites become vain (φθίνοντ' ἀσήμων ὀργίων μαντεύματα - 1013).

In the beginning Creon shows his mad isolation when he declares that even if Zeus' eagles should carry the carrion to this god, he would not be afraid of pollution (μίασμα - 1042) as a consequence of his refusal to have Polyneices buried. Creon is convinced that no mortal can defile the gods (1040-44). This is ironically perverted piety. Of course it is impossible for a mortal to harm the gods, but what Creon forgets is that this fact does not preclude his liability to pollute himself by confusing his relationship to the divine sphere (cf. Parker M 33, 310-11). And as he realizes afterwards, that is what he has done. He has cast a living soul below which belonged above (τῶν ἄνω βαλὼν κάτω - 1068), and he has done the reverse as well: he has kept a corpse above earth, though it belonged to the nether gods (ἔχεις δὲ τῶν κάτωθεν ἐνθάδ' αὖ θεῶν - 1070). The consequence is obvious: pursuit by the Erinyes (1075). Now Creon realizes his one-sidedness—just like Antigone did—and starts invoking Hades (Πλούτωνά - 1200) and Hecate (1199), but this is of no avail. He is not deceived by the gods with respect to Haemon's voice, as he suspects (θεοῖσι κλέπτομαι - 1218). He is deceived by them with respect to the foundations of his life and bereft by them of Haemon and Eurydice. The latter is sacrificed on the altar of Zeus Herkeios, the same god that Creon had previously neglected (487).²⁵ Despite Creon's yielding, his house becomes a true harbour of Hades ("Αἰδου λιμὴν - 1284).

Like Antigone in 922-23, Creon now accepts the authority of divine power, but despite his yielding it gives him no support at all: "I know not which way I should bend my gaze, or where I should seek support"

²⁵ Verse 1301 is hopelessly corrupt, but its meaning is clear: Eurydice commits suicide on an altar. Therefore her death resembles a sacrifice (cf. σφάγιον - 1291; Loraux FT 39). It is generally accepted that it is the altar of Zeus Herkeios which is referred to (e.g. Jebb A 229, Taplin PA 15).

(1341-42). That Creon could not have foreseen this doom is clear from his emphatic statement that it was a god who hurled him into wild ways—a god who wanted to oppress him (μέγα βάρος - 1273), and from his remark that a crushing fate had leapt upon his head (1345-46), implying that the chorus's final observation, that happiness is only attainable for those who do nothing disrespectful to the gods (1349-50), is ironically true. The abstention demanded is impossible as long as man lives. To live means to hope and to be passionate, which inevitably incites the divine game of jealously overthrowing human haughtiness (cf. Rohdich A 222). Like Antigone, Creon trusted the gods and was betrayed by them (Hester SU 39).

Creon's position in his family and the city undergoes a reversal mirroring that of Antigone. Suddenly he is prepared to listen to the chorus again (1099), he acts as a suppliant to Haemon (1230), and he complains about the loss of Eurydice (1290-92). For the first time he is interested in his deceased kin (1300). But his reversal is of no avail. Through his actions the cities have fallen into confusion (συνταράσσονται - 1080): enmity breaks loose (1080) and it is Creon's mind which has brought about the defilement (τῆς σῆς ἐκ φρενὸς νοσεῖ πόλις - 1015). For his one-sided attitude to the family he is punished by its extinction (1066, 1097)(Knox HT 111-12) and he is punished for his lofty position in the city by his banishment. Like Antigone, in the end Creon is completely alone. His lofty position has made him an outlaw (Hester DDS 14). He is less than nothing (τὸν οὐκ ὄντα μᾶλλον ἢ μηδένα - 1325). He has fulfilled the hidden prediction of the first *stasimon* awesome man comes to nothingness (ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται), which is his future (τὸ μέλλον) (360-61).

Creon's downfall bears a strong resemblance to a scapegoat ritual. Previously he was the substitute for Thebes. Now that he has become isolated he continues to be its substitute in so far as all the pollutions of his family and of the city are accumulated on his head. In the course of the tragedy we can follow how the pollution first spreads, and then, in the phase of purification, is contracted in one substitute. When Tiresias appears the whole cosmos has become polluted. The upper world and the nether world have been turned upside down (1068-70), the hearths are contaminated (1016), together with the whole city (1015, 1083). In the phase of purification, first the pollution is heaped on the city's substitute, the house of Creon. This house will be filled by the wailing (κωκύματα - 1079) Creon denied to Polyneices' corpse (κωκύσαι - 204), but which is nevertheless raised by Antigone (ἀνακωκύει - 423). Finally Creon becomes the substitute for the house. He accepts the responsibility for the deaths of Haemon (1269) and Eurydice (1320). He is like a voluntary scapegoat: "the guilt can never be fixed on any other mortal," he

declares (1317-18), reflecting Oedipus' parting speech in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and confirming the hypothesis that Creon is another scapegoat (Segal TC 175, Rohdich A 229). Like Megareus, whose bed is called famous (1303) because he saved the city in sacrificial atonement by jumping into the dragon's den at Tiresias' command,²⁶ Creon is sacrificed as the city's polluted substitute.

That Creon should be acceptable as a scapegoat necessarily implies that he must previously have been the city's substitute in a positive sense, something which is confirmed in the words of Tiresias and the messenger. Both emphasize that Creon was the saviour of Thebes (Tiresias: ἔχεις σώσας πόλιν—1058; the messenger: 1162). He steered the ship of state on a proper course (994, 1164). This does not conflict with the fact that afterwards Creon should defile the city; on the contrary, it is its prerequisite:²⁷ Creon can only be a royal scapegoat if he is the person who saved the city as well as the person through which it became polluted. Both functions are incomprehensible to those separatists who believe that Creon is merely an ordinary human being.

Structurally, the final act in the drama of creating a scapegoat may be the incorporation of the royal scapegoat into the city after its death. Oedipus for example becomes *hypsipolis* again after his death: his grave within the confines of the city is a source of beneficial power. This final ritual, in which the beneficial aspects of power are definitely separated from the poisonous ones, can be found in the *Antigone* as well—not with respect to Creon, but to Polyneices. His body is not only washed and burnt as a final purification (cf. Burkert OS 20), he is also buried in native soil (οἰκείας χθονός - 1203), something which would have been quite impossible if he had still been considered an ordinary traitor (Szlezák BDS 116). The final incorporation of Polyneices into the city may be symbolized in the high mound erected over him (τύμβον ὀρθόκρανον - 1203): no ordinary mortal would have obtained such an honour.

Of course Creon's double confounding of the upper and the nether world, illustrated by the carrion on the altars, is also a confusion of the realms of life and death (Segal TC 177). Despite his obedience to Tiresias' demand not to kill a dead person again (1030), and to yield to

²⁶ Cf. Eur Phoen 1010-13. We follow the reading of the manuscripts, κλεινὸν λέχος, against Bothe's conjecture, κλεινὸν λάχος, adopted by Dain/Mazon (DM 121) and Jebb (A 231) or Seyffert's κένον λέχος, accepted by Müller (SA 270).

²⁷ Tiresias may even be saying that Creon is still the saviour of the city. Note the periphrastic construction in 1058; τῇδε ναυκληρεῖς (994) should be read as a present tense, in accordance with the mss., and against most editors, the underlying suggestion being that as its scapegoat, Creon will save the city again.

the dead (1029), Creon is compelled to live an unbearable life in the margin. Whereas Antigone was a marginal who was alive as she descended into Hades, Creon has to continue his life as somebody who had died already (ὄλωλότ' ἄνδρ' - 1288): he is a living corpse (ἐμψυχον...νεκρόν - 1167)(Knox HT 116). In the end, Creon shares Antigone's earlier longing for death (Segal TC 199). His only wish is not to look upon another day (1329-30). Just as in the end Antigone was not allowed to live, Creon is not allowed to die (Jens AI 310). What Creon has done, killing the killed, now returns on his own head: "Alas, I was already as dead, and thou hast smitten me anew" (1288). As Antigone did before him, Creon has to experience that the harbour of Hades is hard to purify (δυσκάθατος - 1284).

Despite his yielding Creon is crushed by the law of talion. He has to offer a corpse as compensation for the other corpses (1067).²⁸ The wailing he has forbidden (204) now arises in his own house (1079). Nobody will deny that the chorus is right when it says to Creon that too late he recognized justice (ὀφεί τήν δίκην ἰδεῖν - 1270). Creon himself says that in saving the established cosmic laws (καθεστῶτας νόμους - 1113) one ends one's life in the best possible way.²⁹

But the unanswerable question remains: how is man to know whether he is complying with the cosmic law or not? This tragic question of Creon's has to be exorcized by separatism when it maintains that from the outset Creon's law was merely meanness (Lesky DH 115) and that therefore Antigone's claim that Creon was a base tyrant was essentially justified. But separatism cannot explain why, until the arrival of Tiresias with his stunning revelations, nobody but Antigone and Haemon should have opposed the justness of Creon's decree. Nor does Tiresias claim that traitors should be buried: what he says only applies to this exceptional case of the son of Oedipus (1018), exceptional precisely because of Polyneices' royalty and his being a Labdacid. Tiresias never utters a word of approval of Antigone's deed (Hester SU 39, Rohdich A 205), nor does he maintain that Creon was wrong in punishing Antigone. He is merely opposed to its failing ritual form (Linthorpe AC 256). Nor can separatism explain why it should not only be Creon who points out the unpredictable tragic nature of his erring (note the oxymoron in 1261:

²⁸ The fact that Tiresias calls Antigone a corpse should put an end to the tedious discussion (since Jebb xviii/xix) about whether Creon should or should not have gone to Antigone's crypt first and only afterwards to Polyneices' corpse.

²⁹ Various interpreters are convinced that Creon is here referring to Antigone's burial customs (e.g. Jebb A 198, Kamerbeek A 186, Vernant MTG 102), but it is more likely that he is referring to the established cosmic laws the messenger mentions (τῶν καθεστῶτων - 1160).

φρενῶν δυσφρόνων ἀμαρτήματα), but Tiresias as well. He points out that, though Creon has saved the city, erring is common to all human beings (1024). This remark would be senseless if Creon or anybody else could have foreseen that the gods would disagree with his rituals. Creon's royal reasoning has been overruled rather than refuted (Hester SU 39). The unpredictability of divine justice makes it at once inescapable and unbearable.

The tragedy reaches its apotheosis in the final, inextricable confusions of insight and illusion. Tiresias asks Creon to learn (μανθάνειν) from his well-spoken words (1031-32), that he has to yield (εἶχε - 1029). He points out that this might be a gain (κέρδος - 1032). Creon is intrinsically unable to rate this gain at its proper value, because he has to go on identifying his gain with that of the city. His deluded mind now sees an advantage for the city in suspecting Tiresias' trustworthiness. He is afraid that the seer is counseling for his own gain (1037, 1047, 1061). The irony is that Tiresias' prophecies indeed offer Creon no gain at all (Müller SA 230). His remark that sober-mindedness (εὐβουλία - 1050) is the most powerful possession is ironic as well. Neither Antigone nor Creon could have avoided their rashness and their perverted conceptions of gain.

First Creon is immovable (ἀκίνητος πέλη - 1027), pointing out to Tiresias that awesome (δεινοί) mortals make a shameful fall (Πίπτουσι...πτώματ' αἴσχυρ' - 1045-46). Then he turns to prudence, in vain, when he says that his judgement has taken a turn (ἐπεστράφη - compare the guard - 1111). In the end, his prediction concerning awesome mortals is brought down on his own head (Markantonatos TIA 495). Though Creon accepts that it is no use waging war against necessity (1106), Tiresias' awesome (δεινὰ - 1091) prophecies come true. Creon's tragic predicament is that by obeying he will suffer. He outlines this situation when, echoing the first *stasimon*, he says: "it is awesome to yield (τό τ' εἰλαθεῖν γὰρ δεινόν), but in resistance to smite my own temperament (θυμὸν) with ruin (ἄττη) is just as awesome (ἐν δεινῷ πάρα)" (1096-97). Both Antigone's perseverance and Creon's futile yielding show the truth of the messenger's words: "no one is a seer (μάντις) to men concerning those things which are established (τῶν καθεστῶτων)" (1160).

But is not Tiresias the very model of the seer who is familiar with divine truth? He is, but that does not mean that thereby he is exempt from tragic ambiguity. Tiresias' insights reflect divine truth—but the nature of this truth is damaging. The opposition between divine truth and mortal opinion is like the Dogon's opposition between Nommo and the Pale Fox: the power of divine insight is a power of confusion to mortals. Tiresias' insights are divine—but for this loftiness he has to pay the price that in the mortal world he is lower and more ineffective than or-

dinary mortals. The person who sees divine truth is blind in the mortal world. He who guides mankind has to be guided by a child or a slave (1012). The tragic conflict is that the seer knows the truth but is politically ineffective, whereas the king can see and act but is unable to recognize divine truth (Goheen ISA 85, Buxton BLS 25). Therefore Tiresias' truth is destructive. Tiresias knows this. He is extremely reluctant to utter the truth because he knows that through its utterance he accomplishes the fulfilment of his words (ἥνυσας- 1178).³⁰

Creon learns by suffering (1271), as Antigone did, but this does not imply that he has chance of improvement or acceptance. Learning by suffering merely means obtaining insight into man's tragic position, but being unable to do anything about it: it means being brought to heel. In the final song, when the chorus maintains that prudence is essential to happiness, they are right,³¹ but they are well aware of the emptiness of the admonition. They add that it is only in old age (γῆρας - 1353) that prudence is learnt. As long as man is young and lively he has to be imprudent, because he is full of awesome violence (cf. Rohdich A 223). Prudence is only feasible when death is near or when life is without value. Prudence is the virtue of living corpses.

A final question we have to ask is whether the purification of Thebes by the extinction of the Labdacids and its cognate branch has been successful. That is the conviction of one variant of the harmonizing point of view (e.g. Lesky DH 115). This point of view is reflected in Rohdich's remark that the result of the heroine's destruction and of that of her counterpart Creon is not only that the polis should survive unscathed, but that thanks to their sacrifice the polis is justified and acclaimed (A 229). Rohdich considers this mere semblance, but he is convinced that this semblance is the tragedy's final answer to the questions it has raised.

But the *Antigone* reveals more than the fact that order has to be established or re-established. First of all it leaves the conflict between family and state unresolved. It also reveals the residue which cannot be incorporated into order: the ambiguous *deinotes*, which is at the root of order, but which also must be exorcized for order's sake. The sacrifice of Antigone and Creon fails because Thebes is sacrificing part of its own essence. The *Antigone* cannot be reduced to a glorification of prudence, it is not just a *laudatio* of Ismene, since it shows the necessity of prudence

³⁰ A corresponding translation of l.1178 is: "O seer, thou hast fulfilled thy words (ἥνυσας), so that they come right (ὀρθόν)" (Jebb A 209). Through Tiresias the gods and fate accomplish their aims— therefore the seer brings his prediction to pass by his uttering of the words (Kamerbeek A 239, Linforth AC 192).

³¹ We agree with Hester that the chorus's words do not only refer to Creon, but to Antigone as well (SU 40, cf. PWS 10).

as well as its futility when it is bereft of *deinotes*. The price of Thebes' purification is that the city banishes *deinotes*, *orge*, Eros, Dionysus. As Ismene's fate shows, this banishment of holy madness ends in sterility, just as the glorification of power ends in destruction. There is no separative or harmonizing solution for the fact that order and madness are two-in-one.

7.9. Sophocles' cosmology

Sophocles' universe is an interconnected whole in which nature, man and the gods indissolubly belong together. The divine order comprises the movements of the cosmos, the actions of the gods, and the fates of mortals. Sophocles does not, as modern poets do, try to revivify the rationally separated cosmos by means of anthropomorphic metaphor. When he links human fate with natural phenomena like the wind or the waves, he is not transferring human significance to the wind and the sea, it is the other way round. Man is intercalated among the powers of nature, as one of their metamorphoses. It is impossible to say that in the first *stasimon* *deinotes* is transposed from man to nature. *Deinotes* is the primary power of which both natural events and man partake.

Only in the light of the primacy of the cosmos as a divine whole is it possible to appreciate Sophocles' descriptions of the vicissitudes of human life. Reversals of fortune are not primarily human phenomena which are deplored or cheered. Tragic insight shows that, mostly without the actors being aware of the fact, man's actions are part of the cosmic whole. In this context the words of the messenger in the *Antigone* are of interest:

There is no estate of mortal life that I would ever praise or blame as settled (standing - *στάντ'*). Fortune (*τύχη*) sets straight (*ὀρθοῖ*) and fortune lets down (*καταρρέπει*) the fortunate and the unfortunate from day to day (*ἀεί*). And no one is a seer (*μάντις*) to mortals concerning those things which are established (*τῶν καθεστώτων*). (1156-60)

The messenger is not uttering pessimistic lamentations on human existence, he is offering a dispassionate description of established cosmic law. This is neither pessimistic nor optimistic: it is not only the lucky who sink, it is also the unlucky who are raised. The messenger is referring to the cosmic movement of generation and destruction.

In other passages in Sophocles' work the cosmic meaning of human fate is further elaborated, for example in this choral song from the *Trachiniae*:

Grief and joy come round (*κυκλοῦσιν*) to all, as the Bear comes round in his circling paths (*στροφάδεις*). This I say since starry night does not abide with men, nor does calamity nor wealth. (129-33)

Again we are confronted with the cosmic cycle of generation and destruction, which is not confined to the destruction of wealth, but points to the reversal of calamity as well. Man's fortune is inserted into the circling of the stars. There is no anthropomorphic 'wheel of fortune' which is transferred to the movements of the stars. The 'symbolic' pattern of the stars is the primary bearer of significance—a significance which is not transferred to man either, but of which man is a constituent part:

The Bear, by contrast [to the anthropomorphic wheel of fortune] is a deep-toned reality, up there for all to see, a living power as were all stars to the Greeks, active in bringing seasons [...]. The Bear's movement relates prosperity symphonically to adversity, making neighbours of these opposites. (Jones AGT 175)

The movement of the cosmos is one of eternal returning, and human life is part of this movement. A day can bring low all human things, and a day can lift them up again (Aj 131-32, cf. OC 1454-55). In one movement, the eternal returning embraces the earth, life, the human family and the polis (OC 610-15).

When we hear of the movement of eternal returning to which man's life-cycle belongs, the question arises why Sophocles is not a pantheist, why he is not advocating an attitude of acceptance, or even *amor fati* with respect to this divine cosmic movement. Is it not possible for man to move in tune with the cosmic law of generation and destruction? The specificity of tragic cosmology lies in the fact that man belongs to the cosmic order and is at the same time opposed to it. The idea that divine order could be embraced is foreign to this cosmology, which consists of an extended duality. On the one hand man's movements are inevitably in accordance with cosmic law, on the other hand they are as inevitably discordant with it. The fundamental problem is that, as the messenger says, man is unable to know the nature of the established ordinances. Therefore he acts counter to them and is destroyed. Ironically, in his destruction he fulfils the demands of order. Divine order needs the disorder of boundary transgression in order to fulfil itself. Let us read Sophocles once more:

But my fate is always circling (κυκλεῖται) on the shifting wheel (τρόχῳ) of the god and alters (μεταλλάσσει) its nature; like the face of the moon is never able to stay for two nights in one shape, but first comes issuing from the dim (ἀδήλου) - then grows with lovelier face waxing to the full -, and when it appears (φανῇ) at its comeliest (εὐπρεπεστάτη), then forthwith it flows away (διαρρεῖ) and comes to nothingness (μηδέν). (Fr 871R)

Here we are confronted with Sophocles' duality of perspective. From the divine point of view, there is the eternally circling wheel of generation and destruction—the perfect divine order, but for concrete things like the

moon and man there is no divine order. They have to cope with the unpredictable movements of fortune. They are unable to stay two nights in the same shape. When they are at the peak of their existence they come to nothingness.

In tragedy we are confronted with the simultaneousness of the divine and the mortal points of view, and with the fact that these perspectives are irreconcilable. Only when he stops living is man able to adopt the divine perspective. As long as he lives he is surrounded by the dangers of unpredictable change.

The duality of the divine and the human perspectives is the major subject of the *Antigone*. The first *stasimon* shows how nature and man have their boundaries apportioned to them. But the finite beings are unable to stay within these boundaries. They can only exist if they continue to partake of the power which has engendered them, if they keep sharing in the *deinotes* which has brought them into existence. But then power is doubled: on the one hand it is divine, apportioning power, on the other hand it manifests itself in finite entities. It is this duality that engenders the tragic conflict. The power concentrated in finite entities prevents them from accepting the boundaries set them. They are 'hybrid.' In a cosmic sense, this transgressing of boundaries is in accordance with the established ordinances. As Anaximander also points out, things have to pay for their violations according to cosmic law (DK B 1). But things are different from the perspective of the entities themselves. They have to stay within their boundaries, but they have to transcend them as well. It is both necessary and impossible to avoid transgression. Because entities need strength in order to exist, they are unable to distinguish between the exercise of power inside and that outside their limits. To them, such transgressing is not order, but terrible disorder leading them into unexpected destruction. The endurance of finite beings is so small that they are unable to adopt the divine perspective. For example, it is evident that all things come to their apportioned end, but from their finite perspective this state of affairs is unacceptable. Finite beings can only exist by permanently using their finite power against the dangers of destruction, which nevertheless is inevitable. This is precisely the position of Antigone and Creon at the end of the play. They know that their life and death are in accordance with the divine ordinances, but they lack the fortitude to accept this perspective. In the *Antigone* the cosmic order is revealed in its duality. It is part of this order that finite beings transgress their limits and are destroyed. Divine order is also disorder.

CHAPTER EIGHT

TRAGEDY AND SOME PHILOSOPHERS

8.0. Introduction

In the preceding chapters we have endeavoured to show how radically the cosmology of the *Antigone* differs from modern European modes of thinking and living. To this end we have tried to distance ourselves from our separative cosmology. However, we realize that this distance is relative in more than one respect. First of all, it is impossible to transcend one's cosmology in such a way that one shares the life of the other. In a sense, interpretations are lifeless. They are of a partly formal and empty character. Secondly, it is impossible to transcend the bounds of one's language. We had to strain separative language in order to approximate the ambiguities and contradictions of the *Antigone*. At best, the result of our interpretations is that we have pointed out gaps in our cosmological building. It is absurd to pretend that we are able to fill them. We can point out the fact that Zeus and Eros have no place in our cosmology, but we are unable to live under their sway, even if it were desirable—an unanswerable question.

Yet the otherness of a tragedy which is one of the pillars of our culture is interesting enough. It may occasion the suspicion that our culture lives on an intrinsically conflicting cosmological basis, while it is its cosmology's very nature that all contradictions should be removed or assimilated. The awkward relationship between our cosmology and the *Antigone*, which belongs to its core and yet remains totally foreign to it, is strikingly clear from the history of philosophy.

For centuries philosophers have referred to the battle between philosophy and tragedy. Plato mentions their "ancient strife." That the war is not over may be gathered from remarks by Nietzsche and Ricœur. The former speaks of "an eternal struggle between the theoretical and the tragic world view." Ricœur's conception is even more radical. In his eyes, tragedy is anti-philosophy (SM 107). It is an insupportable revelation, unacceptable to thinking (SM 200). According to Ricœur, philosophy cannot reaffirm tragedy as such without committing suicide (CI 305). In this chapter we will ask what the nature of this never-ending war may be.

The father of metaphysics, Plato, was fully cognizant of the whole range of differences between the tragic cosmology he partly belonged to

and the new cosmology of separatism which he advocated in certain fundamental respects. It was not moral censorship which compelled him to exorcize tragedy, but the fact that for cosmologies the times had changed. The rise of separative cosmology necessitated the banishment of tragedy. This banishment was so successful that Aristotle could reintroduce tragedy to the polis after it had been separated from its interconnected nature and had been reduced to the specific realm of art as pleasurable entertainment.

The separation between philosophy and tragedy as a form of art has been so successful that for centuries modern philosophy could afford to leave tragedy outside its range of questions. For example, from the philosophies of Descartes and Kant tragedy is virtually absent. With the rise of Hegel's philosophy, (belonging to a specific cultural context we cannot go into here), separative cosmology made a sharp and surprising turn. Hegel reintroduced one aspect of interconnectedness into metaphysics: the existence and development of genuine contradictions in a reality which is internally divided. The consequences of this metamorphosis, which still exerts its influence, have been enormous. Tragedy, and especially the *Antigone*, was readmitted into the heart of philosophy. This constitutes a challenge to philosophy's separatism which has not yet been answered. Small wonder that since Hegel hardly any philosopher of repute has been able to disregard Greek tragedy. The tenets of separatism and the genuine contradictions of tragedy demand a reconciliation.

Since the rise of Hegel's philosophy metaphysicists have been unable to exorcize tragedy according to Plato's example. They try to account for it and incorporate it into philosophy or into a transformation of philosophy. Yet philosophy is indissolubly bound to separative cosmology, so that any attempt at reconciling philosophy and tragedy will be an assimilation leaving aside as a by-product something that was tragedy's very essence in the context of interconnectedness. Hegel, for example, accounted for genuine contradictions—but his *Antigone* has been separated from all ties with pollution, ritual and ambiguity. And he tried to surmount tragic conflict by a reconciliation on a higher level. Those philosophers who have tried to account for pollution and ambiguity in Hegel's vein, for example Ricœur, have been unable to do so without banishing some of tragedy's interconnected aspects.

A totally new challenge to European cosmology was constituted by the philosophy of Nietzsche. After Plato he was the first to bring philosophy into contact with the dreadful ambiguity of Dionysian power. In Nietzsche's wake the *Antigone* has been given a central place in philosophy by Heidegger and Derrida. In these philosophies, the problem of har-

monization between philosophy and tragedy crops up in various ways, without any trace of a solution. It is our conclusion that there is no harmony between philosophy and tragedy. It is impossible both to reject the *Antigone* and to adopt it within European cosmology.

8.1. Plato's banishment of tragedy

In our days it has become quite fashionable to pass moral judgment on Plato's attitude with respect to tragedy. Either Plato is easily condemned from an enlightened democratic point of view as a philosopher who acts like a censor and a puritan, or he is praised for the 'courage' of his ethical convictions (Shorey IR lxiii). These moral judgments tend to obscure the fundamental questions at stake. They release the judges from the obligation to ask whether Plato was not bowing to cosmological necessity when he banished tragedy and whether this banishment was not so deep-rooted that it continues to determine Western thought, especially moral judgment. Therefore we agree with Goldschmidt when he maintains that the professed 'immorality' of the tragedians does not suffice to explain Plato's hostility towards them, but that the issue is a matter of truth (QP 136).

If we wish to understand Plato's attitude to tragedy we have to take seriously his own professed reason for banishing unsuitable poetry from the polis and only accepting poetry which has been purified. What Plato says is: "For the *logos* constrained us" (ὁ γὰρ λόγος ἡμᾶς ἥρει). *Logos*, and not some ethical prejudice, forced Plato to take a stand which he could not change. In his own words, it was impossible for him to betray what he saw as the truth (Rep 607c). The *logos* taking hold of Plato is the logic of separation. This logic was not inaugurated by Plato or by anyone else; it is part of the cosmology of separation in which Plato partook. Before discussing the other categories of this cosmology (confining ourselves to the context of Plato's treatment of poetry in the *Republic*), we shall look at the category of insight, because this will clarify the nature of this separative *logos*.

In chapter 3 we referred to that fundamental event in Greek philosophy: the introduction of the principle of non-contradiction as the basis of the separation of consistent truth from changeable opinion (cf. Detienne MV 124,). For Plato, this is the kernel of real insight, contrary to the sphere of phenomena. Truth is separated from illusion, because truth cannot consist of contradictory statements on one and the same subject (de Rijks PS 330-32): "Did we not maintain that it is impossible for the same person to hold contradictory opinions about the same thing at the same time?" (Οὐκοῦν ἔφαμεν τῷ αὐτῷ ἅμα περὶ ταῦτὰ ἐναντία δοξάζειν ἀδύνατον

εἶναι; - 602e, cf. 436b). According to Plato's philosophy, self-contradiction should be excluded not only from statements on reality but from the human soul as well. If there are contradictory movements in a man concerning the same thing, there must be two things in him (604b). As soon as there seems to be a real contradiction in functions of the soul, we know that there was more than one thing functioning (436b).

The separation of truth from appearance is essential in Plato's philosophy, because only the truth of the *eidos* guarantees an unimpaired identity in what is known. Only then can we guarantee that known reality always remains the same, is not composite (*asuntheton*), is unalterable. Reality as it shows itself in appearances should be rejected, because it threatens the purity of knowledge. In appearance the same object may seem to be bent or straight, concave or convex, according to whether it is in or out of the water (602c). Appearance therefore is disorder and self-contradiction, which should be mastered by true insight.

The separation of truth from appearance is not presented to us on a salver. At the outset, the situation is one of an intermingling of truth and appearance. Appearances are like illnesses, time and again intruding upon the purity of the soul. Therefore philosophy, being an endeavour to reach the order of pure identity, is primarily to be used as a medicine, a remedy against the dangers of the intrusion of appearance. Only after a pharmaceutic operation of separation is it possible to regard the realms of good and evil, truth and falsehood, essence and appearance, inside and outside, as being really exterior to each other. Philosophy is medicine as much as it is pure knowledge (Derrida Diss 117).

This is what Timaeus maintains at the beginning of the *Critias*. He hopes that he has spoken according to measure (*μετρίως*), and not out of tune (*παρὰ μέλος*). And he adds that knowledge is the best drug (*ἄριστον φαρμάκων*) against that danger. We shall return to Plato's use of the essentially ambiguous word *pharmakon* in this context, which has been meticulously elaborated by Derrida.

The cosmological necessity of keeping the unclear, the changeable, the contradictory outside the realm of knowledge, if knowledge is to retain its essence: unchangeable truth—that is the *rationale* of Plato's banishment of tragedy. Tragedy threatens separative order. Therefore philosophy has to act as a drug against this polluting power—a purifying drug. This is stated explicitly at the beginning of the tenth book of the *Republic*:

That kind [of imitative art] seems to be a pollution (λώβη) of the mind of all listeners who do not possess the remedy (φάρμακον): knowing (τὸ εἰδέναι) how it [i.e. imitative art] really is. (Rep 595b)

Plato's aim is the aim of philosophy in general: to ensure that not appearance (τὸ φαινόμενον) should be master in us (ἄρχειν), but rationality

(τοῦ λογιστικοῦ – 602e). Because Plato's description of tragedy is quite adequate—he emphasizes its changing and self-contradictory nature—it is reasonable that he should endeavour to separate it from human minds too easily seduced by its emotions and confusion.

Plato sees tragedians as imitators, even as imitators squared: they are concerned with appearances of appearances (602b). Small wonder then that the world of tragedians is extremely unstable, as is apparent even in the dangerous language they employ. They use concepts which are awesome (δεινὰ) and fearsome (φοβερά). By means of these concepts they appeal to man's confused and confusing emotions: they send shudders through their audience (387b-c). These appeals to emotion are dangerous, because only too soon this pollution spreads to the rational part of the soul. Though the rich vocabulary of the poets is only a superficial colouring, it casts a spell (κῆλυσιν) over the audience (601b). As a result tragic statements are just emotional persuasion. In order not to be deceived by this deceitful clothing the words of tragedians have to be stripped bare (γυμνωθέντα) (601b), i.e. they have to be purified. All human beings are acquainted with the struggle between the irrational and the rational parts of the soul. In order to avoid this struggle, man has to master the inferior part by his calculating abilities. Then the self-contradiction of the inferior part itself is avoided as well. The fundamental flaw of mimetic art is that it unduly stresses the inferior part of the soul, thereby jeopardizing rationality. Tragedy causes self-contradiction to go on reigning supreme. On the one hand Plato denounces the real oppositions within man as depicted in mimetic art:

Is, then, a man in all this of one mind with himself (ὁμονοητικῶς)? Or is it the case, just as he combated himself (ἑστασάζεν) with respect to seeing and held within himself opposing (ἐναντίας) opinions about the same thing, that also in his actions he is divided against himself (στασάζει) and is fighting with himself (μάχεται αὐτὸς αὐτῷ)? (603c/d)

On the other hand Plato refers to tragic persons not only as being in contradiction with themselves but as being many-coloured, diversified, double-edged (ποικίλον—605a) as well. Such self-contradictory and ambiguous people are dangerous. They threaten the highest part of the soul which contemplates unchangeable truth. To be able to contemplate truth the soul itself has to be constant, it has to remain as much identical with itself as possible. Only in such a stable condition is it able to make the necessary clear distinctions between truth and falsehood, between justice and injustice (611c).

As might have been expected, Plato's separation of philosophy from imitative poetry is no isolated phenomenon. This separation extends

through the whole of his cosmology in a series of transformations. First of all, by transformation, his division of the soul into an emotional and a rational part is at the same time a division between nature and culture. In the symbolic representation of the soul in the *Republic* book IX the lower parts are represented by a many-headed monster and a lion, whereas the higher, rational part is represented by a human being. A truly rational person will give his truly human qualities complete domination over the monstrous and bestial aspects. Thereupon we are confronted with a familiar agricultural metaphor: rational man will take charge of the monster, like a farmer who will cherish and train the cultivated plants (ἡμερα), but will check the growth of the wild ones (ἄγρια) (589b).

As in the Egyptian example of the garden tree the separation between nature and culture is endangered by a basic ambiguity. Wildness cannot be completely separated from the cultivated garden. Its inordinate growth has to be checked continuously. Analogously, rational man is basically and persistently possessed by wild forces which, if unchecked, overgrow his rationality. Certainly the rational are just and as such tame (ἡμερος), not wild (Gorg 516c). But before that situation can be reached the primordial wildness must be banished, otherwise a really tragic situation will set in: the beast and the lion will dominate and starve the human being, while they cannot be reconciled to each other either. They “bite, devour and fight” each other (589a). In the light of this danger of wildness it is understandable that Plato should consider the conjunction of the soul with the animal-like body a pollution from which the soul must be purified:

But to know its [i.e. the soul's] true nature we must view it unpolluted (λελωβημένον) by communion with the body and other evils as we now contemplate it, but we have to examine it adequately in the light of reason, what it is when it is purified (καθαρόν γιγνόμενον). (611c)

This statement presupposes that there is a primordial communion of body and soul, a state of undistinguished impurity.

In the light of the necessary cosmological separation of nature and culture it is inevitable that tragedy is banished. Tragedy is emphatically concerned with just this realm of the bestial and the vegetal. Tragedians are gardeners who let their garden be overgrown with wild plants. Poetic mimesis “breeds” (τρέφει) wild feelings, “irrigating” them (ἄρδουσα), whereas from the point of view of rationality they should be “parched” (αὐχμεῖν) (606d). It is clear that tragedy fosters the forces of wild nature when it compares heroes like Agamemnon, who should be supremely human, to low animals. Plato attacks the description of the leaders of

Greece in a terminology taken from nature, as in *Il* 1.225: “with thy eyes of a dog and the heart of a fleet deer” (*Rep* 390a).

Through a well-known transformation, Plato’s logic of separation extends to the gods. To Plato the poetic image of anthropomorphic gods is dangerous. This is understandable if we take into consideration that man’s highest part is unchangeable and rational, but at the same time divine (611e). If man’s higher part is divine on a microscopic scale, then the divine on a macroscopic scale will be equally unchangeable, and completely unlike phenomenal variety. The kernel of divine existence is that it should not be changeable but at one with itself (*ἀπλοῦν* – 380d). Least of all should the god be many-shaped (*ἥμισα ἂν πολλὰς μορφὰς ἴσχοι ὁ θεός* – 381b). The god cannot even desire to change himself (381c). In the light of the necessary singleness of divinity, all its other aspects are understandable. The gods should not commit injustice and not create strife amongst each other (378b). They can only be held responsible for good things, not for bad things (379b), and they cannot be fraudulent.

That this separation of the gods from all that is changeable is a pharmaceutical activity is conspicuous when Plato maintains that the gods, being essentially good, are not responsible for many things in the world (379c). Apparently there are forces which have more influence than the gods, forces from which the gods have to be separated. It is interesting to note that the superhuman nature of the divine implies a distancing (analogous to that of the Cartesian God) between man and the divine. Gods cannot be moved by gifts from mortals (390e) and they do not send deceiving signs which might be interpreted mantically (382e/383a). The most important point is that the gods are not jealous. If they lead man into destruction, that is merely just punishment (380b).

Through this procedure of separation of man and the divine, Plato is able to avert human hubris. On the one hand he is convinced that man’s divine part can be separated from his lower parts. On the other hand he is certain that the gods will not punish man if he tries to be god-like. Therefore Plato is able with impunity to exhort men to become god-like (*θεῖοι*) in so far as that is humanly feasible (383c, 613a, cf. Aristotle *EN* 1178a22). And thus the problem of ambiguous tragic erring, caused by the malevolence of the gods, is precluded. Man can only impose the guilt for his evil deeds upon himself. He should not blame the gods for his iniquities. Thus the notion of tragic erring has lost its sting.

Again it is no more than consistent that Plato should reject the intrusion of ‘hybrid’ heroes into the polis. Such heroes are mixtures of god-like and animal-like characteristics, and as such are dangerous:

Nor will we suffer our youth to believe that Achilles [...] was so full of confusion (*ταραχῆς*), that he had two contradictory (*ἐναντιῶ ἀλλήλοις*) maladies

in himself, servility because of greed and at the same time arrogance (ὑπερηφανίαν) towards gods and men. (391c)

By another transformation Plato's cosmology has to expel the emotional dangers which surround fundamental human social relations. Rational, godlike man should be as unchangeable as possible, implying that he should not be marred by disturbing emotions and passions. He should possess as much endurance of such disturbances as possible. This state of independence, of self-sufficiency, is especially needed in social ties, whose severance too often produces emotional disturbances. Such social atomism is characteristic of separative cosmology. Self-sufficiency is the hall-mark of rational man. Therefore rational man is as independent of others as possible. He "is most of all men sufficient unto himself (αὐτάρκης) for living rightly, and differs from others in having least need of anybody else" (387d-e). Only by self-sufficiency can the disturbance of emotions caused by the loss of a family member or friend be averted. The rational power of endurance is medicine against the disturbing power of suffering. Rational man therefore bears up with modesty when fate overtakes him (387e). Thanks to philosophical pharmacy, emotional ties like those of Creon and Antigone no longer affect rational man. For him it has become bearable to lose a family member: "Least of all then to him it is awesome (δεινόν) to lose a son or a brother" (387e, cf. 603e). It is a logical consequence that Plato should be opposed to the tears and lamentations of tragic heroes and that he should call mimetic art a foul woman having intercourse (ξυγγιγνομένη) with a foul man, engendering foul offspring (603b).

By another transformation, death can lose its awesomeness as well. First of all, in the light of his self-sufficiency, rational man will fear death least of all (386a-b). And in the second place the fear of death is unnecessary because, in so far as it constitutes a unity with itself and as such is godlike, the soul will be as immortal as the gods (611b,e). Small wonder that Socrates can take his departure from life "with fair hope, serene and well content when the end comes" (496e). Like Antigone at the beginning of Sophocles' tragedy, Plato believes that death should be praised (386a-b), but he would severely condemn her reversal in the *kommos* when she starts lamenting her impending doom. Anybody bewailing his fate when he has to leave life unwillingly is despised by Plato as giving a bad example (386d). Again it is only by a therapeutical procedure of separation that the danger of an intermingling of life and death is banished. Rational law is needed against the "shameless greed of living" (Crito 53e). Apparently this force of life is primordial, and only by philosophy's medicine can it be checked.

Finally, it is evident that Plato does not accept any ambiguity in the law of talion:

We are going to say that so it is that both poets and writers of prose speak wrongly about men in matters of greatest moment, saying that there are many examples of men who, though unjust, are happy, and of just men who are wretched, and that there is profit in injustice if it be concealed, and that justice is the other man's good and your own loss; and I presume that we shall forbid them to say this sort of thing and command them to sing and fable the opposite. (392a-b)

The banishment of poetry is an inevitable prerequisite to attain the purity of separative cosmology. This point may clarify the position of ambiguity in separative cosmology. To Plato the separation of truth and appearance, of the unchangeable just person and the variegated tragic person, of ratio and emotion, does not come first. A prior necessary move is a therapeutical procedure of banishing. The forest of unclarity has to be cleared in order to reap the pure harvest of rationality. Philosophy is therefore first of all "banishing threnody by therapy" (ιατρικὴ θρηνηδῖαν ἀφανίζοντα — 604d). Before this procedure, the boundaries between rationality and tragic spell are not settled. Even after the separation of tragedy and rationality the former is still a threat to order. The question is: how is it possible that tragedy is still able to cast a spell which might contaminate rational man and the well-ordered polis? Is it not reasonable to suppose that rational order is preceded by and permeated with ambiguous power? Separative cosmology rests on an ambiguous power which has to be banished before purity can be reached, but which cannot be expelled forever. As Derrida renders it in his interpretation of Plato's pharmacy:

The purity of the inside can then only be restored if the *charges are brought home* against exteriority as a supplement, inessential yet harmful to the essence [...] it is thus necessary to put the outside back in its place. To keep the outside out. This is the inaugural gesture of "logic" itself, of good "sense" insofar as it accords with the self-identity of *that which is* [...]. The cure by *logos*, exorcism and catharsis, will thus eliminate the excess. (Diss 128)(Fr Diss 147)

Derrida has argued convincingly that, if it is to be effective, the medicine of philosophy will have to share aspects of the illness it banishes. Up to a certain point the medicine has to be homeopathic. It has to use the self-same ambiguous power that it banishes. Philosophy is a drug, a *pharmakon*. But as such it is opposed to another *pharmakon* (or, in an ambiguous sense, the same *pharmakon*): the poisonous drug of tragedy. Then the ambiguity of pharmaceutical power is primary, and philosophy has to make use of the same ambiguity which it subsequently expels.

Ontological knowledge becomes a pharmaceutical force opposed to another pharmaceutical force. The order of knowledge is not the transparent order of forms and ideas, as one might be tempted retrospectively to interpret it; it is the antidote. Long before being divided up into occult violence and accurate knowledge, the element of the *pharmakon* is the combat zone between philosophy and its other. An element that is in itself, if one can still say so, *undecidable*. (Diss 138) (Fr. Diss.158)

In its attack on tragedy, philosophy has to expel something of its own ambiguous basis. But is not that exactly the situation we have described as the tragic predicament? In order to establish culture, an ambiguous hero has to employ his power, but the resulting order has to make him a scapegoat, because his power is an undermining pollution. In a sense, Plato's pharmacy is a quasi-ritual effort to control ambiguity. The specificity of separative cosmology is not that it does not subsist on ambiguity, but that it can only subsist if the first separation within ambiguity is followed by a second, if the initial banishing therapy is separated from the consequent purity of order. Only then will all traces of ambiguity have been removed. This second banishment, a throwing away of the ladder to purity, consists of a process of *forgetting* the initial banishment in an exclusive emphasis on clarity. In interconnected cosmology there is also a continuing activity in order to control ambiguity by separation and expulsion, but there a total expulsion of ambiguity is never achieved. It returns time and again. It is never totally controlled by procedures of separation, which therefore never end. Myths, rites and tragedy have to be repeated *ad infinitum*, because they do not totally succeed as pharmaceutic measures.

In a sense, Plato is very close to tragic ambiguity. His banishment of tragedy shows that he is alive to its undermining dangers. One might say that his banishment of tragedy is not complete, because he is haunted by the fear of its renewed intrusion; he is not able to forget tragedy. This second banishment succeeds in the philosophy of Aristotle. It is interesting to note that in Plato's philosophy another aspect of the ambiguity of *pharmaka* is recognized. There is the ambiguity of the poison of tragedy, which has to be counteracted by the counter-poison of philosophy, but the emotional drug of tragedy itself is ambiguous as well. Sometimes emotional discharges which are comparable to the tragic are considered by Plato not as poisons but as medicines, as cathartic drugs. In the *Leges* he describes the Dionysiac enthusiasm and he sees it as an external motion which may overpower internal motions (emotions) of fear and frenzy (φοβερὰν καὶ μανικὴν – Leg 791a). But this emotional overpowering of emotions is not an even more dangerous poison; it has the reverse effect. By overpowering (κρατήσασα) the emotions, it brings calm

to the soul, like a homeopathic medicine. Of this emotional power Plato says:

The Bacchants, who are awake, it brings into a sound state of mind (ἔξεις ἔμφονας) instead of frenzy (ἀντὶ μανικῶν), by means of dancing and playing, with the help of whatsoever gods they chance to be worshipping with sacrifice. (Leg 791a-b)

In Bacchic ritual the Dionysian frenzy, which is a poison when employed in tragedy, is at the same time a homeopathic therapy.

What happens in Aristotle's account of poetry is that this curative effect of Bacchic frenzy, which is recognized by Plato with respect to ritual, is extended to tragedy. Just like Plato, Aristotle is convinced that tragedy influences the emotional part of the soul in movements of pity, fear and enthusiasm. According to Aristotle's *Politica*, such *pathemata* are disturbances (Pol 1341a17ff). In tragedy these emotions are stirred once more, but in this case the effect is thought to be curative. The spectators are purified of the disturbance of these emotions by homeopathic therapy. Contrary to Plato, Aristotle believes that a confrontation with tragedy enhances the citizens' emotional stability (cf. Pol 1342a). Tragic catharsis is a control of ambiguous emotional power strengthening man's resistance to the emotional trials of real life (Lucas AP 283). (Of course this medicinal theory has ritual aspects – Parker M 288-89).

Plato and Aristotle seem to emphasize opposite aspects of the drug tragedy, but this parallelism is only apparent. Aristotle was able to forget the dangerous power of tragedy thanks to his separation of tragedy from danger and its confinement to the category of health-producing drugs. On the basis of this secondary banishment Aristotle was able to consider tragedy an innocent source of pleasure devoid of cosmological significance. "Aristote est au-delà de la crise tragique" (Girard VS 405).¹

To Plato, tragedy was dangerous because it threatened to undermine morality and pedagogy. To him, tragedy was cosmologically relevant. To Aristotle, it was possible to acclaim tragedy as a pleasant medicine, because he had banished tragedy from the sphere of religion, ethics and pedagogy, in short, from cosmology. This is conspicuous in his description of various types of music (Pol 1341a21ff., 1341b32-1342a29). Aristotle classifies music as three types: ethical melodies, melodies of action and passionate melodies. Only the ethical melodies are to be used in educa-

¹ As regards Aristotle's claim that tragedy is more philosophic than history (Poet 1451b4ff.), we agree with Lucas: "The question why god allows iniquities is not answered, or even asked, by tragedy as A[ristotle] understands it. Accordingly many may think that his claim that tragedy is philosophic does not amount to much" (AP 120).

tion, the others are merely useful for listening to while others are performing. Only the latter types belong to tragedy. Such types of music act as drugs. Their effect on emotional people, who are easily influenced by fear, pity and enthusiasm, is that they are "thrown into a state as if they had received medical treatment and a 'catharsis.'" But for Aristotle this catharsis is purely a matter of action and passion, *it is not ethical*:

All [emotional people] must undergo a "catharsis" and a pleasant feeling of relief; and similarly also the "cathartic" melodies afford harmless delight to people. Therefore those who go in for theatrical music must be set to compete in harmonies and melodies of this kind [...] but for education, as had been said, the ethical class of melodies and of harmonies must be employed. (Pol 1342a14ff.)

We agree with Guépin when he maintains that in this separation of theatrical music from all ethical matters Aristotle is engaging in polemics with Plato (TP 219). And there is no reason why the same should not hold true for his conception of tragic catharsis in general. In so far as tragedy is catharsis, it is a "harmless delight" and cosmologically irrelevant.

By this banishment of tragedy from the sphere of ethics and cosmology, Aristotle finally exorcized Plato's fear of tragedy. As a result, tragedy could return to the city without harm. It was reduced to *divertissement*. Aristotle is not only the father of literary criticism which concerns the domain of aesthetics as distinct from philosophy and science, he is also the father of the modern stage, which is irrevocably dependent upon Plato's and Aristotle's metaphysics as a pleasurable entertainment, separated from philosophy and cosmology.

8.2. Ricœur's reconciliation of tragedy and philosophy

In chapter 5 we pointed out the extraordinary depth of Hegel's interpretation of the *Antigone*. We saw how he revealed the mirroring tragic errings of both Antigone and Creon in their inescapable one-sidedness. Hegel also remarked how deeds in themselves engender contradiction (*Entzweiung, Trennung*) and thereby tragic guilt. Finally, Hegel emphasized how in the end the tragic protagonists undergo a reversal in acknowledging their tragic guilt. All this emphasis on dividedness has not prevented Hegel from maintaining that the ultimate outcome of the tragedy, in spite of the destruction of individuals and "sittliche Mächte," is absolute justice, a state of higher harmony, in which the previous opposition is surpassed and retained (*aufgehoben*) at the same time: "Erst in der gleichen Unterwerfung beider Seiten ist das absolute Recht vollbracht" (PG 337).

Here we must ask what the nature of the *Aufhebung* and of absolute justice consists of. We have to realize that this final reconciliation is not a harmony without residue. The "submission" of both sides of Antigone and Creon is also the protagonists' destruction. They have to be sacrificed in order to reach the higher stage. Hegel's dialectics resemble a procedure of controlled ambiguity. As in the case of every other ambiguous ritual, the adjustment it brings about can also be considered a violent expulsion. In this context Derrida points to the opposite of the idea of *Aufhebung* as the outcome of the *Antigone* (Gl 188).² From the point of view of tragic cosmology the position of Creon and Antigone should be reread, not only as the victory of absolute justice, but also as the ineradicable duality of human disorder and divine order. For Dionysiac logic there is no harmony and no solving of contradictions in any phase of development. It reveals the coexistence of order and disorder (Segal DP 286-87).

In the twentieth century it was Ricœur who made a renewed attempt to reconcile philosophy and tragedy in a higher harmony, though his claims are much more modest than Hegel's. He merely hopes for a reconciliation in an eschatological expectation. On the other hand, Ricœur has faced one aspect of interconnectedness which had no prominent place in Hegel's philosophy: pollution. It is interesting to see how Ricœur introduced pollution into philosophy and whether his attempt at harmonizing them left a residue which could not be incorporated into the new unity.

In *La symbolique du mal* we witness a confrontation of tragic cosmology with Jewish and Christian thought regarding one central theme: the place of evil in cosmology. Ricœur approaches the cosmology of evil on two levels of symbolism. The first is that of symbols *sensu stricto*: opaque signs in which divergent superimposed (interconnected) meanings shine through (SM 21-24). According to Ricœur, the primary symbols of evil are pollution, sin, and guilt. He traces an evolution in which each stage of symbolism is "surpassed" by the next, but the lower stages are "retained" at the next stage in a higher harmony.

The second level of symbolism is reached when symbols are developed in a story employing them in a specific time and space (SM 25, 153-54). Ricœur compares four myths concerning the origin and the end of evil. Two of them are relevant to us: the tragic myth of the evil deity and the Adamic myth. Before we try to interpret Ricœur's ideas concerning sym-

² "La logique de l'*Aufhebung* se retourne à chaque instant dans son autre absolu. L'appropriation absolue est l'expropriation absolue. L'onto-logique peut toujours être relue ou réécrite comme logique de la perte ou de la dépense sans réserve" (Gl 188).

bolism and the myths of evil, we have to ascertain what he means when he speaks of an evolution of symbols and myths.

When Ricœur refers to a "stage" of symbolism of myth which has been superseded by the next, he is not speaking of the abolition of the previous state but of a "mediated sublimation" (SM 49) by which it is preserved at the higher stage. That means that the lower stage is "reaffirmed" at the higher one (SM 73).

In this context evolution should not be regarded as a temporal phenomenon but as a structural one. The symbolism of a culture may be more 'archaic' than a comparable symbolism in another culture, which nevertheless precedes the former by as much as a millennium (SM 59). Transitions from one stage to another occur time and again (SM 51).

Finally it should be realized that evolution is not progress *tout court*. A subsequent stage may prove to be a loss as well as a gain (CI 287). Yet this consideration has not caused Ricœur to drop the terminology of evolution and merely to speak of cosmological variations, implying that, despite occasional losses, the subsequent stages are higher or richer than the preceding.

Of course, Ricœur too interprets pollution not as consisting of "literal" dirt, but as something "symbolic" (SM 41), but he sees the sphere of the symbolic as a secondary superposition on the literal (SM 146, CI 285), while in our eyes the opposite is true: the literal is a metaphysical extraction of the symbolic—which is therefore not symbolic in any current sense. Ricœur too connects pollution with purification (SM 31), with independence of intentionality (SM 32-33), and with contagiousness (SM 34). In the light of this conception he is able to oppose pollution radically to the ethics of sin. Only the latter consists of the rupture of a personal relationship—with God (SM 72). As such, sin is not primarily a cosmic, but a historical phenomenon. Moreover, it is more internal to the sinner, pollution being more external (SM 19).

Not content with a description of the variations within pollution and sin, Ricœur believes that the symbols of pollution are superseded by those of sin. With pollution we are still in the irrational domain of terror (SM 31-32). Therefore it should be considered "un moment *dépassé* de la conscience." Pollution belongs to a "pre-ethical" stage (34) which is "corrected" by ethics on "a superior level of conscience of evil" (34-36).

The symbolism of defilement was necessarily shattered under the pressure of a new experience and gave way little by little to a new symbolism. If sin is primarily the rupture of a relation, it becomes difficult to express it in terms of defilement. (SE 70)(Fr. SM 72)

Nevertheless the force of the symbolism of pollution is retained at the ethical stage. For example, the Biblical terminology of pollution in the

book *Leviticus* is supposed to be “un ritualisme post-éthique” (SM 131).

Even at a stage still further advanced, that of guilt (more internalized than sin because no longer dependent upon a relationship between man and God as the forbidding father), the terminology of pollution is retained. Certainly in principle the cosmology of sin is such that only the sinner is responsible for his deeds. There is no cosmic constraint forcing man to sin. Nevertheless the terminology of pollution is meaningful at this stage, because despite his freedom man is confronted with the “radical evil” which was there before he was born. Although man is never forced by this primordial evil, he tends to be “seduced” by it. In this sense radical evil is still a primordial pollution. This being seduced is symbolized in the exteriority of an impure contact (SM 149).

Here we should stop and realize that the pollution which is retained at the higher level has also lost something of its ambiguous nature. At the higher level pollution has become symbolic, one might say; it is no longer a primordial force. Pollution has become symbolic pollution because it is a temptation to which in principle man can offer resistance. No longer does it belong to man’s nature, as Ricœur himself acknowledges:

The symbol here points toward the relation of radical evil to the very being of man, to the primordial destination of man [...] then we shall understand that evil is not symmetrical with the good, wickedness is not something that replaces the goodness of a man; it is the staining, the darkening, the disfiguring of an innocence, a light, and a beauty that remain. However *radical* evil may be, it cannot be as *primordial* as goodness. (SE 156)(Fr.SM 149-50)

The reconciliation at the “higher” level has been bought at the expense of a banishment. Pollution has been transformed in such a way that it is separated from essential aspects of its ambiguity. Pollution has become a mere power of evil and can in principle be resisted. But in the *Antigone* pollution is not just an evil. It is one face of ambiguous power which is also the power of creation. From the perspective of the *Antigone*, Ricœur’s question of whether good is more radical than evil cannot even be raised, because both are intertwined in ambiguous power. This primeval ambiguity of pollution is expelled in the “retaining” of pollution at the stages of guilt and sin.

The reconciliation of pollution and ethics obscures the fact that ethics is the expression of a metaphysical longing for order. This order can only be reached after pollution is expelled, but because the ambiguous power of pollution remains the ambiguous basis of ethics, it returns time and again in European cosmology in various disguises.

According to Ricœur, the evolutionary scheme is not restricted to the level of symbols. It applies to the level of myth as well. He discusses the

struggle of tragic myth with the Adamic myth. These myths differ radically. Whereas the Adamic myth is separative, in that the divine and the diabolical are not confused, the essence of tragedy is a melting pot of the God-like and the devilish:

The ambiguous figure tends toward the tragic when [...] the same divine power appears both as a source of good counsel and as a power to lead man astray. Thus the non-distinction between the divine and the diabolical is the implicit theme. (SE 213-14)(Fr. SM 201; cf. SM 169-70)

Such a concept is unacceptable to the Adamic mind because it contains the scandalous theology of predestination to evil (SM 200), and because no separation is made between ambiguous power and the sphere of the divine (SM 203). In opposition to the "unacceptable" tragic theology the Adamic myth professes the essential goodness of God and his creation (SM 170), a conception which is evidently "anti-tragic" (SM 289).

For Ricœur, the battle between tragedy and Adam is won by Adam. He has made the tragic god "caduc et impossible" (SM 225). But, like at the level of symbolism, the war is really only ended when the enemy is hauled into the camp of the victor and a reconciliation ensues. Having destroyed him, the Adamic myth reaffirms its enemy (SM 287, CI 291-92). Tragic myth is "incorporated" into Biblical myth, but—and that is what stands out—"à un rang subordonné" (CI 300). Ricœur acknowledges that at this level the reconciliation is very difficult indeed. Though the Adamic myth has gained the victory, tragedy remains "invincible" (SM 303). It survives its destruction by Platonism and Christianity (SM 291). It keeps haunting the victors as an unpalatable "residue":

The preeminence of the Adamic myth gives rise to the thought that evil is not a category of being; but because that myth has a reverse, or a residue, the other myths are invincible. (SE 328)(Fr. SM 304)

But if at the 'higher' level the Adamic myth leaves a residue which cannot be incorporated, how can Adamic myth be pre-eminent? Obviously, wishful thinking is the only option left for Ricœur to bring about a reconciliation between the indefatigable contestants. This option consists of no more than hope of a new, harmonious, future world as the *eschaton* of history. Only in the eschatological future can tragedy be incorporated totally, without leaving a dangerous residue of ambiguity:

Only a consciousness that had accepted suffering without reservation could also begin to absorb the Wrath of God into the Love of God [...] only *timid* hope could anticipate in silence the end of the phantasm of the "wicked God". (SE 326)(Fr. SM 303)

This last conciliatory move again has to leave a residue behind; tragedy cannot be totally incorporated into eschatological hope. Harmony is bought at the expense of exorcizing a fantasm: the ambiguous 'evil' god. This time the scapegoat is selected silently, within the hope of the *eschaton* of history. Ricœur's hope is no longer like the Sophoclean hope, a boon and a false lure of giddy desires (Ant 617). Eschatological hope is pure, but this purity is attained by suppressing ambiguity. Only in the light of such pure hope is it possible to maintain, as Ricœur does, that man's "essence" or "destination" is intrinsically "good," and that this essence can be separated from the mere "existential or historical" state of "alienation" in which man accidentally exists at the moment as a consequence of the actuality of evil (SM 155). From the tragic point of view this separation of man's 'good' nature from accidental evil is a sign of hope in its capacity of a false lure of giddy desires.

What deconstructivists denounce as a secret connection between monotheistic theology and philosophy is acknowledged by Ricœur: "The belief accorded to the pre-eminence of the Adamic myth is common to the way of the philosopher and the way of the theologian" (SE 310/SM 288). The basis of this kinship is that to both Adamic myth and philosophy the paradox and ambiguity of tragedy are unacceptable (cf SE 305, SM 200), implying that the victory of Adamic myth over tragedy is a victory of philosophy as well, and also that philosophy has to accommodate tragic myth.

Ricœur endeavours to effect this reconciliation at the level of language, attempting to incorporate the symbolic language of tragedy, with its paradoxes and ambiguities, into the ordered language of philosophical thought. Ricœur's final aim is to give new life to symbolic thought after its 'destruction' by separative philosophy (CI 305). He does not abandon philosophical rationality (CI 292), but tries to re-integrate the richness of symbolism, which had to be expelled, with metaphysics (SM 325).

Again it must be asked whether such a project of integrating symbolism into philosophy is a real integration or a separation within the ambiguous nature of symbolism. Ricœur's own remarks feed these doubts. He himself has pointed out the "impossibility" of formulating the tragic theology in coherent discourse (SM 213, 292), and the fact that philosophy is being undermined if it tries to speak of tragedy (SE 219/SM 206): "In order to express primordial incoherence, speech must become out of joint (*se disloquer*) and obscured." What aspects of symbolism must be exorcized in order to make it unobjectionable to philosophical thought is also made explicit by Ricœur. In offering an interpretation of Accadian and Babylonian myth he acknowledges that in these myths the origin of things lies beyond good and evil, that this origin is ambiguous power,

engendering both order and monstrosity (SM 169-70). This symbolism will never be acceptable to philosophical thought. It is quite understandable that Ricœur should call this a "terrible possibility," rendered in a "wild story." In the face of this wildness, philosophy has but one pharmaceutical remedy: "exorciser radicalement cette possibilité" (SM 170).

It is difficult to see how Ricœur could ever integrate tragedy into philosophy if one considers seriously his opinion of the tragedies of Sophocles. In the Sophoclean cosmology there is no end to tragedy (SM 214). They consist of a "non-dialectical contradiction" (SM 215). Admitting such contradictions into philosophy would mean the end of philosophy. In this respect the philosophies of Plato and Ricœur are analogous. They have to reject their own ambiguous foundation in order to reach the unimpaired identity of their separative cosmology.

8.3. Philosophical acceptance of tragedy

Since Nietzsche's confrontation with Dionysian power, philosophers have realized that a reconciliation of tragedy and philosophy at a higher historical level may be unattainable, because their cosmologies differ too radically. If tragedy is to be taken seriously, philosophical order has to be broken up, undermined, transformed. In this context Nietzsche demanded a transformation of philosophy in order to accept Dionysian disorder and duality. In the twentieth century, philosophers like Heidegger, Gadamer and Derrida, have tried in their own ways to open up philosophy to tragedy, not in order to reach a new stage in a historical evolution, but in order to accept the essence of tragedy as it transcends metaphysical order. Each of them tries to exert forbearance with respect to tragedy and specifically to the *Antigone*.

Under the term of 'forbearance' we take together a wide range of philosophies endeavouring to accept tragic ambiguity. To some philosophers the acceptance of tragedy implies the power to accept human limitations. To these philosophers—Gadamer is an excellent example—the confrontation with tragedy is the exercise of the ancient virtue of patience (*hypomone*), the power to endure (*karteria* – Gorg 507b), self-sufficiency (*autarkeia* – Aristotle EN I, X). In the eyes of others, especially Nietzsche, tragedy may teach forbearance, not with human limitations, but with Dionysian power. To Nietzsche, tragedy does not teach resignation but *amor fati* in its most pregnant sense: the embracing of power and duality.

1. Gadamer.

In the second chapter we pointed out that Gadamer recognizes the one-sidedness of the dialectical conception of experience. His philosophy

is in opposition to Hegel's where the latter's idea of a reconciliation of negativity at higher historical levels is concerned. Dialectical philosophy is a movement of interiorization of negativity which inevitably ends in a situation in which all possible negative experience has been incorporated into absolute spirit. Gadamer calls this idea of a reconciliatory dialectical movement—paradigmatically applicable to the fates of Antigone and Creon—'hybrid' (WM 285, 325). To the dialectical aspect of experience he opposes what he calls the hermeneutical aspect. He emphasizes that not all experience can be interiorized into an enlarged self-awareness of the spirit. Sometimes experience teaches us that we are unable to control all that happens to us. Then we have to face the fact that we are finite beings. According to Gadamer, this experience of human limitations is the religious lesson of tragedy. Man learns through suffering. Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* is adduced as chief witness for the character of hermeneutical experience, which is opposed to the hubris of dialectics. In his conception of learning through suffering Gadamer shows his prudential conception of tragedy. He is convinced that confronting his limitations makes man able to accept them. As man becomes experienced, he learns to know the limits of his predictions and planning. Experience teaches us acceptance of reality as it is (WM 339-40).

The idea that the experience of finiteness leads to man's acceptance of his position as a mortal in the universe is closely connected with Gadamer's conception of tragedy. Tragedy confronts its audience with a spectacle of division, but in his eyes this confrontation leads to the spectators' liberation. They become able to accept events as they have occurred. Through this acceptance they are also able to return to their own selves, which had become internally divided by tragedy. In the end, through tragic melancholy man's continuity with himself is heightened: the division (*Entzweiung*) is resolved (WM 125-26). According to Gadamer this affirmation of reality as it is is not confined to the spectators of tragedy. The tragic hero on stage partakes in the affirmation by accepting his own fate (WM 125). Therefore in the end tragedy is reconciliation (KS I 156-57). In the Attic theatre, all citizens were united in "cultic integration" (AS 66). This idea of tragic acceptance has determined Gadamer's conception of learning through suffering as it is exemplified in the *Agamemnon*: this learning is interpreted as learning to be prudent in accepting human limitations (WM 339).

Here we must ask whether this conception of tragedy as acceptance really accounts for its tragically ambiguous nature. We are convinced that Gadamer has left out the ambiguity of Greek tragedy and that this is patent in his interpretation of Agamemnon's learning through suffering. What was the substance of this learning? Did Agamemnon accept

reality? Not at all. The gods had brought him into a dilemma from which he could never escape. Zeus had sent him to Troy in order to punish the Trojans for their transgression of the divine law of hospitality in abducting Helena. Two eagles were sent to Agamemnon, apparently as a propitious omen. The birds however killed a pregnant hare, which incited the wrath of Artemis. According to the seer Calchas she considered the eagles to be the substitutes of Agamemnon and Menelaus. According to the law of talion Artemis demanded his daughter Iphigeneia as a substitute for the hare. Agamemnon had now become the sport of the conflicting divine powers. If he disobeyed Artemis he would resist the gods, if he sacrificed his daughter he would transgress divine law as well. It was, as he said, a heavy doom not to obey, but it was as heavy to kill the treasure of his house (Ag 206).

According to the chorus, Agamemnon learnt through suffering (Ag 177, 250) after his decision, taken in overweening temperament (Ag 215-16), to sacrifice Iphigeneia. But it has to be emphasized that this learning consisted of nothing else but the reiteration of his perverted sacrifice. He was sacrificed in his turn by Clytaemestra. For Aeschylus *pathei mathos* is the same as *drasanti pathein*: whoever acts is brought to heel (Denniston/Page CA xxvff). Learning through suffering does nothing to conceal the conflicting nature of the cosmos and it gives—just as in the *Antigone*—no hint at avoiding hubris by prudent acceptance of limits. *Pathei mathos* implies the opposite: hubris is unavoidable as long as man lives. Insight only comes when life is over.

If Gadamer had recognized that the tragic *anagnorisis* implies neither acceptance nor the possibility of prudent limitation, he would have to revise his interpretation theory completely. His hermeneutical philosophy is based on prudence in the Aristotelian sense. Like Aristotle, Gadamer bases his hermeneutics on the distinction between prudence (*phronesis*) and hybrid all-doing (*panourgia*) in interpretation (Aristotle EN VI 1144a26ff, WM 306). In this distinction however the tragic problem has already been overstepped. The question is: how is man able to distinguish prudence from hubris when both are indispensable to human life? Who can guarantee that interpretations do not share in man's combined orderliness and awesomeness?

2. Nietzsche.

In his reinterpretation of Schopenhauer's distinction between 'will' and 'representation' as the distinction between the Dionysian and the Apollonian, Nietzsche has brought philosophy into contact with the fundament of interconnectedness, the power which underlies and undermines separative order. Nietzsche's philosophy in the *Birth of Tragedy*, the book to which we will confine ourselves here (with the exception of some

remarks at the end of the section), is a glorification of ambiguity as it is exemplified in Dionysus. For Nietzsche tragedy does not, as it does for Gadamer, consist of a lesson of resignation to the inevitability of limits. This is clear from his polemics with Schopenhauer (in GT, Versuch einer Selbstkritik 16). Throughout his career Nietzsche has emphasized that tragedy has nothing to do with renunciation of happiness, hope, or the will to live (cf. GM III 828-29).

What tragedy can teach us, according to Nietzsche, is the nature of human hubris. Man can reach the heights in only one way: by committing felonies. Tragedy also teaches us that hubris will not last: the gods have to punish man in his noble striving for the summit (GT 59, cf. FW II 132).

In this fundamental opposition between overweeningness (*Uebermass*) and prudence, between over-measure and measure, lies the principal significance of the opposition between Dionysus and Apollo. Apollo is the ethical deity who demands measure (*Mass*) and prudent self-knowledge. As such he is the enemy of *Selbstüberhebung und Uebermass* (GT 33-34), the principal characteristic of Dionysus. Apollo is the god of order who "draws boundary lines." The danger which threatens him (as argued by Douglas) is that of formalism, of "Egyptian rigidity," which might cut off the movements of the sea of ambiguous power. Nevertheless from time to time the high tide of Dionysian power demolishes all boundaries (GT 60).

This opposition between ambiguous power and order propagates itself through a number of well-known cosmological categories. The Dionysian, for example, is the unbounded source of nature as against the boundaries of culture (GT 49). Put in front of the bearded satyr accultured man shrinks into a caricature. But at the same time the Dionysian is the unbounded force of life in opposition to the boundary of death. It is "das triumphierende Ja zum Leben über Tod und Wandel hinaus" (GD II 1031). Furthermore, Dionysus is an example of amoral power which is opposed to the limits of Apollonian morality and justice (GT 60, 118, 122, 131). And Dionysian life is power which transcends the limits of individuality: it is supra-individual (N III 791-92).

Finally the opposition is transformed to the category of insight. In *The birth of tragedy* (in contrast to Nietzsche's later work), the distinction between Dionysus and Apollo is also that between truth and appearance. The Apollonian sphere is "Täuschung" (GT 119), in contrast to Dionysian music which represents "the true idea of the world" (GT 119, cf. 121). (In this context Nietzsche also employs the opposition between 'Gleichnisbild' and 'Urbild' - GT 129).

It has to be emphasized that Nietzsche's Dionysus is not just unbounded life-power—he is not chaos or the *apeiron*. His characteristics have to be seen in relation to order. For example, Dionysus is "Uebermass" (GT 34). He is not even just power but also absence of power. This comes to the fore in the figure of Dionysus Zagreus, the god who is torn apart and scattered and who is both a horribly wild demon and a mild and meek sovereign (GT 61).

That Dionysus is not just independent power is also seen in Nietzsche's theory of tragedy. Here is it emphasized that Dionysian power cannot display itself without the channel of Apollonian order. Nietzsche is convinced that the chorus constitutes tragedy's original Dionysian element whereas the dialogues represent an Apollonian world of images (GT 52, 55). One implication is that the nature of tragic heroes is being conceived as primarily Apollonian. They are ordered, finite channels of Dionysian power and as such deceptive. Spectators tend to identify themselves emotionally with these individuals by pitying the heroes' destruction. Through that identification they are lured into Apollonian appearance. By identifying themselves emotionally with tragic heroes the spectators protect themselves against the confrontation with real Dionysian power (GT 117). Because tragedy offers these possibilities of identification with individuals it is a force of illusion. It merely presents the spectators with a faint image of the real world as it is revealed in Dionysian music (GT 118-19).

But according to Nietzsche this Apollonian identification with individual heroes is not the final level on which to interpret tragedy. In the real confrontation with tragedy the Apollonian semblances, incorporated in the fate of individuals, is superseded by Dionysian reality:

In the most essential point this Apollonian illusion has been broken through and destroyed. As a whole[...]the drama obtains an effect beyond all Apollonian artifice. In the total effect of the tragedy the Dionysian preponderates again. (GT 119)

This is the sense of the "Bruderbund," the "pre-established harmony" between Apollo and Dionysus in tragedy. Certainly Dionysus needs Apollo. For example, he has to express himself in Apollonian language. But the gods are not on a par. In the end Dionysus represents reality, whereas Apollo is only appearance.

This implies that the compassion which spectators feel for finite heroes is unreal and phenomenal. Reality is the lust which, through tragedy, can be felt in the identification with boundless Dionysian life:

[The audience] shudders at the sufferings which will befall the hero, but nevertheless it senses in them a higher much more overpowering lust (GT 121)

[...]the hero, the highest manifestation of the will, is destroyed to our satisfaction, because he is a mere appearance and the eternal life of the will is unaffected by its destruction. (GT 92)

The individual pain and destruction are thus mere phenomena compared to the reality of supra-individual life. It is interesting in this context to meditate on the kinship between the attitudes of Hegel and Nietzsche regarding the fate of individuals. In his early notes on tragedy Nietzsche expresses himself in the following way: "The narrow aim of the individuals is surmised as means of a world-design [*Weltplan*]. His destruction a surety that the world-design is promoted by him according to his part" (Colli/Montenari, 7.219). In both cases the individual fate is justified as part of the all-embracing order of the world. This implies that only on the basis of a movement of banishing phenomenality and individuality in favour of the totality of reality is Nietzsche able to consider Dionysian power as a unity:

The fundamental insight in the unity of all that is there, the consideration of individuation as the fundamental root of evil, art as the joyful hope that the spell of individuation may be broken, as an augury of a reinstated unity. (GT 62)

This unity however differs from the Hegelian harmony of opposites. In Nietzsche's conception Dionysus is a self-contradictory force. What does unity mean then? The unity Nietzsche professes is one of joyful forbearance of ambiguity, in all its negativity and conflictingness. Through all his oppositions and his dreadful aspects Dionysus is embraced and venerated as the eternal affirmation of all things. In Dionysus even the deepest melancholy becomes a dithyramb. Through Dionysian music and tragedy even "the most evil world" is "justified" (GT 133).

In light of this exaltation of indestructible life Nietzsche conceives tragedy as a "consolation" (GT 47), even as a "salvation" (GT 48-49). He goes as far as exhorting his readers to become Dionysian, to identify themselves with the unity of life (GT 93), in short, to become tragic themselves. Nietzsche hopes for a rebirth of tragedy: "Now dare to be tragic: for you will be redeemed" (GT 113). Man who is a forlorn wanderer is able to gain a homecoming (*Heimkehr*) in the celebration of Dionysus (GT 110, 121-22, 125, 127, 128, 132-33).

To understand how Nietzsche can conceive Dionysus as a justification of all the evil and terror which makes him a power of harmony—not the harmony of the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, but the harmony of acceptance of all division—we have to realize that Nietzsche is bound hand and foot to separative cosmology. Dionysus as the harmony of opposites is the conse-

quence of two essentially separative operations. In the first place Nietzsche conceives Apollo as the secondary, the phenomenal, in contrast to Dionysus' truth. This implies that Apollo is not really opposed to Dionysus. But before this exorcism of Apollo another banning order has been issued to which Henrichs refers when he argues that the opposition between Apollo and Dionysus prevented Nietzsche from placing the opposition between ambiguity and order *within* Dionysus: "Nietzsche [...] was far too preoccupied with the larger antithesis between Apollo and Dionysus to pay much attention to differentiation within Dionysus" (LSS 220). (We must warn the reader that this objection is only valid for Dionysus as he is represented in the *Birth of tragedy*, not for Dionysus in Nietzsche's later philosophy). By his separation of the two gods Nietzsche was able to purify Dionysus in a paradoxical way: to purify him of all purity. Thereby Dionysus was separated from one of his most fundamental aspects: that of civic order. Only after the banishment of civic Dionysus was Nietzsche able to embrace the unity of Dionysus as pure power.

In this preliminary separation Nietzsche has removed the divided nature of tragic Dionysus. Tragic Dionysus is not only boundless power. At the same time he is a representative of the banishment of power by order. He is not only an ambiguous confuser-god, he is also a founder of culture, even an upholder of the cosmos as a whole. He is the chorus-leader of the stars. He harasses and confuses man but he may also come "with purifying foot" to a sick city. In short, he is "many-named." The struggle between power and order is not a battle between Dionysus and Apollo, but the internally conflicting nature of Dionysus himself which was approximated by Nietzsche when he spoke of Dionysus Zagreus.

Because Dionysus is a self-contradictory unity of order and disorder it is humanly impossible to welcome him in his totality. To the Greeks Nietzsche's theory would be an expression of hubris. He overrates human forbearance with respect to the unpredictability and elusiveness of this many-named god. Nietzsche is like the citizens of Thebes in the *Antigone* who time and again cry for the return of the god, expecting to be able to enjoy his power, but who are as many times disappointed and let down by his unpredictable behaviour.

In this context it must be emphasized that in Sophoclean drama it is not unbounded life which is celebrated at the expense of the destruction of 'phenomenal' heroes like Antigone and Creon. The distinction between truth and appearance is not applicable to Sophoclean drama. This points to the dual nature of Dionysus as life-giver *and* as bringer of death, as chorus-leader of the stars and as confusing force which destroys man. To reduce Dionysus' destructive power over individuals to mere

phenomenality is exorcizing one aspect of his duplicity. Just because Dionysus has to be celebrated as the force of life *and* has to be feared as the force of destruction, his existence is an unbearable contradiction, as is shown in the fates of Antigone and Creon.

On this ground it is alien to tragedy to incite readers or spectators to become tragic or to hope for a rebirth of tragedy. Such hopes can only be cherished when Dionysus is separated from his very ambiguity. Tragedies are not romantic exhortations. They are neither pessimistic nor optimistic. In contrast to the wild Dionysus of some rituals the Dionysus of tragedy is power originally lacerated by its self-imposed limitations. In tragedy Dionysiac life force is not allowed to triumph completely. As Segal maintains:

Unlike the Dionysiac ritual, the Dionysiac art form enacts the power of the god but also reflects on the limits of that power[...] Unlike the other manifestations of Dionysiac power, the "drug" of the theatrical illusion is its own antidote, for it contains the process of awakening from illusion to reality. (DP 265-66)

Tragedy both acknowledges and transcends boundless power by also acknowledging the other face of Dionysus, that of order. The *Antigone* shows that tragedy itself consists of a contradiction, a conflict between the civic Dionysus and the ecstatic (Segal DP 14). Dionysus has to be celebrated. But every celebration of this god is insufficient because it will always neglect or be in conflict with other faces, with other names. The tragic finiteness of man is that he is unable to venerate in a self-contradictory way.

Once more we have to emphasize that tragedy never denies the human necessity to embrace order. Tragedy is not enthusiastic reverence of unlimited power. It is not subversive because it understands the limits of human forbearance. Sophocles does not exhort his spectators or readers to become Antigones. He points out that we are Antigones and Creons,—and Ismenes at the same time.

We are aware that Henrich's objection to the opposition between Dionysus and Apollo has to be confined to the *Birth of tragedy* because in his later philosophy Nietzsche has put aside the opposition between Dionysus and Apollo and brought order and power together in the self-contradictory appearance of Dionysus. But there is one point in which his philosophy remains unchanged: for him Dionysus is still the god of power, confusion and order who has to be and can be embraced. In this context tragedy continues to be a channel for embracing the whole of life in all its contradictions and ambiguities. Individual pain is still only a

“Folgeerscheinung” of cosmic joy (Nachlass III 693). Still the tragic artist is not considered a pessimist but in a sense, an optimist: according to Nietzsche he says yes to all that is questionable and dreadful. The tragic artist is Dionysian (GD II 961). Though in his later philosophy Nietzsche introduces Apollonian order into the realm of Dionysus, now it is as if Apollo has been swallowed completely in the universal acceptance of Dionysus. This enabled Nietzsche to consider Dionysus as the “holy road to life” (GD II 1032) through all horror and destruction:

The one who is richest in fullness of life, the Dionysian god and man, is not only able to allow himself the spectacle of the dreadful and the questionable, but even dreadful action and every luxury of destruction, disruption, negation. In him evil, nonsense, and ugliness appear as if they were permitted, as the consequence of a surplus of creative, fertilizing powers. (II 244-45, cf. II 1109-10)

Despite Dionysus’ ambivalence and temptation (he is the “Zweideutige,” the “Versucher-Gott” – JGB II 755) he continues to be a unity in the sense that his duality and ambiguity are accepted, that his most evil aspects are welcomed. Again we must emphasize that a philosophy of acceptance of duality is separative where the tragic unbearableness of duality is concerned. In Nietzsche’s fusion of man and Dionysus the tragic duality of man being both Dionysian and its opposite, and being unable to bear that duality, has disappeared.

3. Heidegger.

It is impossible to say anything of Heidegger’s interpretations of the *Antigone*, either in the *Einführung in die Metaphysik* or in *Hölderlins Hymne ‘der Ister,’* without being acquainted with his philosophy of Being. Of course it is impossible to present the reader here with a thorough interpretation of Heidegger’s philosophy. Nevertheless we will try to give a rough sketch of it insofar as it is of importance to the interpretation of the tragedy.

According to Heidegger, Europe lives under the sway of metaphysical thinking as instituted by Plato. This thinking is exclusively directed on beings as they are used or known and on their essence which is conceived as belonging to the category of beings as well. This exclusive attention to the beings which are there and to their essence obscures the movement which makes entities and categories of beings possible, Being. Being is not an essence or an idea underlying the beings. It is not another entity. It is rather the movement of apportioning through which categories of being emerge, transform themselves and die off. Being as the movement of assigning categories cannot be separated from beings. It is the difference between Being and beings which constitutes the subject of Heidegger’s thinking.

The movement of Being which has apportioned metaphysical thinking to modern Europe has resulted in the whole of European thinking and living becoming determined by the technical approach of reality. The world we live in is a world of manipulable objects in a storage of energies which can be summoned to use at any chosen moment (TK *passim*). We Europeans live in a world of beings which is organized in a technical way. In the ubiquitous technical way of life it is shown in an exemplary way that Being is forgotten in favour of beings. The technical approach of the world has a tendency to consider itself as the only possible approach. Other approaches are suppressed. More importantly, what is also forgotten is the Being of technique which is radically different from technical beings. That the Being of technique is forgotten is obvious when we realize that problems which arise through the technical approach of reality generally do not give rise to reflection but to adducing more technique. What is forgotten—and this forgetting is no accidental lapse but the essential way in which the technical form of life exists—is the Being of technique. In the modern epoch however it has become a necessity to reflect on Being. This reflection shows that technique is not primarily the employment of a means to an end, but a mode of approaching reality which has been apportioned to modern man. Reflection on this approach may reveal that the Being of technique is one way of disclosing reality which transforms itself internally and which need not be the exclusive mode of approaching it.

Reflection on the Being of technique may teach us that by the technical approach we constantly try to become masters of beings and to be secure within their realm. In short, we try to be at home within the whole of beings. These endeavours to be at home among the beings however conceal and obscure the fundamental danger, the danger that the Being of technique is forgotten in an exclusive focus on technique and more technique. In Heidegger's eyes the technically subdued world obscures man's homelessness in the realm of beings, a homelessness which endangers him. The fact that this homelessness is forgotten uproots man in an even more pregnant way. By being at home in the technical world and forgetting that he is not at home in Being, man is no longer at home with himself (EM 120). The apparent absence of distress in the technically disclosed world is essentially the highest distress:

The partly recognized, partly disavowed homelessness (*Heimatlosigkeit*) of man regarding his Being (*Wesen*) is replaced with the institution of the conquest of the earth [...]. By the success of his accomplishments and the regulation of ever greater masses of people man is driven to a flight for his own Being, in order to represent this flight as the home-coming into the true humanity of the homo humanus. (N II 394-95)

In the light of his idea that the whole of Occidental civilization is threatened by ruin through forgetting the difference between Being and beings Heidegger considers it a necessity to listen to Sophocles' *Antigone* (HHI 81). Confrontation with this tragedy might bring man eye to eye with the danger of ruin through homelessness and with the road to coming home. First of all we have to study his interpretation of the first stasimon and its key word δεινός. Heidegger gives various translations of the word. In its application to the forces of nature he translates it as "overwhelming" (*überwältigend*), in its application to man's confrontation with nature as "violent" (*gewalttätig*). The most fundamental translation however shows that man, being a violator, cannot be at home in overwhelming nature. This translation is "homeless" (*unheimlich* and *unheimisch*). In these interpretations Heidegger points to a duplicity in the concept of τὸ δεινόν which may have some kinship with the duplicity we distinguished in it. According to Heidegger the whole of beings is a whole of overwhelming movement. Man is a being as well and as such he belongs to this whole. But man has a specific position. He has to cope with the whole of beings, to him beings are disclosed as such. Therefore their Being is disclosed (or closed) to him. Man is awesome in an even more pregnant sense than ordinary beings because he needs violence to be at home in the world of beings (EM 115).

One aspect of tragedy is that because man needs violence in order to be at home among the beings he always transcends his limits and then reaches the opposite of his aims. He becomes homeless. This homelessness is not confined to man's relations with beings. Through his language, his moods, his passions, man is open to Being but this contact is violent as well and therefore is another aspect of man's homelessness (EM 119ff.). The fundamental problem of man is that he traces his roads in Being but that by his hybrid behaviour he gets entangled in appearance and ends in deadlock. Then he is excluded from Being (EM 121).

Heidegger sketches man's tragic duplicity when he calls man an in-between (*Zwischenfall*) who vacillates between his own violence and the order of Being (*Δίχρη*). He argues that man can reach no harmony, because his actions are necessarily daring, and thereby hybrid and violent. Un-being and disorder belong to man's very nature. That means that he is nowhere at home, neither among the beings nor in Being (HHI 91). This division is not man's avoidable aberration. Man's duplicity reflects the division of Being itself. Everything that is, is permeated with its opposite (Hum 189, HHI 64, 83). Evil is an ineradicable aspect of Being (HHI 96, 104).

Sophocles' tragedy teaches us first of all that the whole of beings is not

primarily the whole of utensils and ready-made objects, but overwhelming movement (cf. HHI 90). It also teaches us that man's hybrid violence in confronting the power of beings is no moral defect, but the inevitable intermingling of greatness and baseness which belongs to his nature (EM 125).

In his interpretation of Antigone's fate, however, Heidegger goes one step further. Her fate shows that man's homelessness among the beings and in Being is not the last word. Her death shows that homelessness has to be reflected upon from the point of view of Being as a specific form of hominess (*das Heimische*) (HHI 134). The *Antigone* is conceived as another duplicity: that between man's homelessness among the beings and in Being, and a possible coming home in a belongingness to Being (HHI 147). Though the level on which homelessness is being conceived is totally different, Heidegger speaking of the difference between Being and beings, his conception of coming home has some resemblance to Nietzsche's. Homecoming is not leaving aside homelessness but integrating it, assimilating it, accepting it.

This is the sense in which Heidegger interprets Antigone's remark to Ismene (95-96): "But leave me, and the folly that is mine alone, to suffer this awesome thing." According to him, Antigone here accepts her total homelessness. Through this acceptance she is conceived as being able to come home in Being. This does not imply that her homelessness has been removed. In and through accepting her inevitable homelessness in her hour of death she comes home in Being. "Her dying[...]is her belonging to Being. Her dying is her coming home, but a coming home in and through that homelessness" (HHI 129).

According to Heidegger, this is what poetry in its highest sense is about: man's ability to be at home ("das Heimischseinkönnen des Menschen") (HHI 151-52). True poetry, as Sophocles' *Antigone* is, may be one road through which the destruction of the Occident is revealed. This consciousness may eventually enable man to wait patiently for a reversal in Being, a reversal which may bring salvation: "Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst das Rettende auch."

Despite Heidegger's many cogent remarks regarding the *Antigone* (for example, his impressive description of the duality of Creon and Antigone - HHI 64), he interprets Antigone's fate as a coming home in Being, and speaks of tragedy as a possible road to salvation for Europe, showing that his thinking remains foreign to Greek tragedy. To Greek tragic protagonists like Creon and Antigone, the duality of divine order and human fate remains unacceptable. For them there is no coming home, not even in accepting the homelessness of Being. In maintaining that for

tragic heroes their destruction is the deepest affirmation of awesomeness (EM 125), and that in dying Antigone comes home, Heidegger is assimilating the heroes' fate to his philosophy. But this assimilation is a separation of the heroes from their tragic predicament, a predicament that allows no coming home, neither among the beings nor in Being.

The fundamental reason for this separation by assimilation is that Heidegger is moved by his concern for the destruction of Europe. He longs for a new and harmonious place for man in Being with respect to earth, heaven, the gods and mortality. In his eyes this is the meaning of poetry and philosophy. By revealing what is disastrous (*das Heillose*) they lead man on the road to discovering traces of holiness (*das Heilige*) (Hw 294-319). Heidegger is concerned about man's homelessness. In that respect he differs radically from Sophocles. Sophocles is not concerned about man's homelessness, nor about the salvation of Being. He does not hope that man may be at home on the earth, under the sky, in his relations with the gods and mortality. He merely presents us with reality as it is, without any ulterior motive. By his descriptions devoid of hope he reveals the hopelessness of Heidegger's concern. Man is unable not to wear out the earth, not to offend heaven and the gods, he is unable ever to accept death. Since Heidegger is moved by hope's giddy desires, he has to disregard the absence of hope. This absence of hope is the essence of the tragic viewpoint which temporarily shatters every hope of coming home in a divided and malicious cosmos.

Conclusion

If there is one transformation of philosophy in which the paradoxical position of tragedy inside and outside European cosmology has been revealed in the most pregnant way, it is Derrida's grammatology. Derrida's thinking is based on the recognition that we Europeans live in a cosmology of separateness. Our "logocentric" metaphysics is based on the principles of identity and non-contradiction which distinguish philosophy from myth (P 72). According to Derrida, philosophy is characterized by the demand for purity, presence, constancy, coherence. Time and again he shows that this separative order has been bought at the price of exorcizing forms of disorder and marginality which nevertheless are the basis of separative order, while the expelling of disorder is a procedure forced to use aspects of the self-same disorder it is banishing. A convincing example of Derrida's uncovering of our cosmology's concealed foundation is his analysis of the ambiguous meaning of *pharmakon* in Plato's philosophy.

Derrida is fully cognizant of the ineluctable strength of separative cosmology. In his eyes it is utterly impossible to transcend this cosmology by disregarding its underpinning in a new form of thinking. Metaphysical thinking cannot be destroyed. Nevertheless he is convinced that this cosmology may be undermined from inside, by parasitic, dislocating, twisting, doubling modes of interpretation. He speaks of subversion (Gr 12, 39), dislocation (Gr 13-14), transgression (Gr 16), unbalancing (Gr 25) and deconstruction (Gr 39). His aim is the deconstruction of European knowledge in general: the concept of *episteme* and the whole logocentric metaphysics (Gr 68, P 49).

Derrida's undermining practices are characterized by the fervent desire to offer resistance against our cosmology's separating and harmonizing pressures. Separation presupposes an unseparated but conflicting reality which is primary, but which must be partly exorcized for the sake of clearness and distinctness. And harmony is always bought at the price of an assimilation of difference which is another form of exorcism. Derrida knows that this separative pressure is irresistible. The desire to put strict boundaries around the games of writing and re-writing is irrepressible (Gr 87). Nevertheless he offers indefatigable resistance to this uncontrollable desire for separative order. Time and again he tries to reintroduce the waste products of separation and harmony, rejected but ever dangerous, into cosmology. He tries to reintroduce the *pharmakon* into the purity of order. Against the desire for dialectical harmonization by appropriation he undertakes a never-ending effort at disappropriation (P 59, LI *passim*).

With respect to the conflicting relationship between Dionysian power and Apollonian order Derrida is extremely cautious. He gives an admirable description of Nietzschean affirmation of the unpredictable cosmic game, speaking of Dionysian affirmation as the joyous acceptance of the cosmic game, the affirmation of a faultless universe, without truth, without origins, in surrender to absolute chance and indeterminacy (ED 427). But Derrida does not opt for the embracing of ambiguous power. He is interested in the insoluble difference between order and ambiguity, which is also the common ground of Apollo and Dionysus (ED 428). Grammatology is not primarily Dionysian, it is 'obscene' in a literal sense, it works in the wings (Greisch HG 10) of separative cosmology. It is an engagement in division (*engagement dans la division* - Diss 390) against the harmony of separativeness.

What Derrida expects from his dislocating efforts is not always clear. But there are signs that he believes that these dislocations indicate the beginning of a new epoch (Greisch HG 72). His aim is to stand back from philosophy (without transcending it) in describing its laws and to look in

the direction of something totally different (M v). His thinking focuses on a world to come which has already announced itself, beyond the enclosure of knowledge (Gramm 14). From the point of view of separativeness, this future can only be anticipated as absolute danger and a monstrosity. (Insofar as Derrida doubts the possibility of dislocating separative cosmology—which also happens in his writings—it is not clear what distinguishes parasitism from a Gadamerian continuation of tradition).

In the context of this philosophy of undermining duality Derrida interprets the *Antigone*. He calls Antigone an apparition which cannot be accommodated in any order, neither the order of the Greek polis nor that of Hegel's *Phänomenologie*, nor the order of European cosmology in general. She is "inassimilable," "l'indigeste absolu" (Gl 170). She is the element excluded from order but nevertheless assuring its possibility (Gl 183). Her impossible existence in the crypt exemplifies the darkness beyond and within order (Gl 187). The question now is: what meaning can this realization have for European cosmology?

Man cannot live without imposing order, and imposing order implies the creating of scapegoats. The reintroduction of waste products into order does not imply that a situation could ever emerge in which banishment no longer occurs. The pharmaceutical system is not confined to separative cosmology; in a different sense, it lies at the root of interconnected cosmology as well. Derrida himself emphasizes that the system of banishment of disorder is not only the basis of European cosmology but of "certain non-Greek structures of mythology as well" (Diss 194). In the highly improbable case that the undermining of separative order were to succeed, the only result would be a different order with a different concomitant procedure of exorcism. The best Derrida's parasitism can hope for is a new variation of pharmacy, just as Plato's pharmacy was a variation of the pharmacy of Sophocles. What the *Antigone* shows is not that order can be undermined, but that order is as inevitable as its destruction.

A second remark concerns the nature of Derrida's undermining efforts of re-reading and re-writing. Will efforts of reading and writing ever be able to influence separative cosmology? We doubt it. The *Antigone* would be an excellent candidate for such parasitism. It is one of the pillars of our cosmology, yet totally alien to it. Its subject is the conflict between power and order. Yet its reintroduction into our cosmology will have no effect at all, because interpretative efforts have no real influence on cosmology. A cosmology rests on cultural factors such as the economic transformation of nature, communication with the divine sphere by means of ritual practice, social relations, and so on. That these aspects

of culture may be viewed as different forms of writing, as Derrida does, does not alter the fact that an act of writing or reading in a more limited sense is totally incapable of undermining these roots of cosmology. Even if we are able to write about a cosmology characterized by internal conflicts and ambiguity we continue to belong to our own cosmology. However tortuous and parasitic it may be, writing does not transcend separateness, because our writing is based on the whole network of separateness.

Trying to write in the margins of our cosmology does not imply genuine contact with ambiguous power. The unbridgeable distance between a separative undermining of separateness and interconnected tragedy is illustrated by their respective attitudes regarding marginality, transgression and pollution. Derrida affirms subversiveness and transgression; he is proud of being a parasite; he relishes the role of the rebel and the nomad. Such desire and such enjoyment are only conceivable in separative cosmology, where the danger of pollution or punishment from the divine sphere has been exorcized completely. In Sophocles' cosmology it would have been inconceivable for anyone to be proud of being a polluter. Being part of interconnected cosmology, the protagonists of the *Antigone* are the very opposite of parasitic marginals. They long for order and are plunged into disorder against their dearest wish. Only a cosmology of interconnectedness can be in contact with power in so far as it is connected with pollution and with the duality of the human and the divine sphere. The power of subversion is its faint separative echo, separated from awesomeness. The ambiguity of order and power cannot be reactivated, either by patience or by subversion. To us, the protagonists of the *Antigone* are literary figures, not heroes.

This does not imply that our separative culture 'lacks' ambiguity and tragedy, or that it has suffered a loss: there is no supra-cultural point of view from which the gains and losses can be totted up. We can only say that the *Antigone* is part of our innermost being, but that it is also beyond reach. It is a blank in our cosmology which has no power either to propagate or to dislocate it. Our inability to experience this gap in our cosmology is not a tragedy, because our separative life is untragic.

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